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Harvard Vespers.

Addresses to Harvard Students

BY THE

Preachers to the University.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE addresses in this volume were given by the Plummer Professor and the Preachers to Harvard University at the Vesper Services which have been held during the past two years. They are reprinted from phonographic reports which appeared weekly in *The Christian Register*. It has been thought best to retain the direct extemporaneous form in which they were taken down by the stenographer, instead of submitting them to formal literary revision. An address of Rev. Dr. A. P. Peabody, who conducted one of the services, is included.

Given as these brief addresses were to young men in the course of their student life, their application is restricted to no single college. In the hope that they may be found helpful to young men everywhere in promoting the religious life, the Preachers to the University have kindly consented to their publication.

S. J. B.

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HARVARD VESPERS.

I.

THE TWO BAPTISMS.

IN the weeks just before Christmas, a large part of the Christian Church remembers especially the work of John the Baptist. He makes not only the immediate preparation for the advent of Christ, but he is also, with the exception of Jesus himself, the most dramatic and impressive of New Testament characters. Two qualities unite in him, each of which is rare, but both of which together are almost never seen. The one was his self-confidence: the other was his self-subordination. It takes a bold man to begin a new reform, but it takes a much bolder man to revive an old and discarded movement; and this last boldness was that
of

of John the Baptist. For three hundred years the prophetic voice had been altogether silent, and now with an amazing confidence it speaks again. It is the same prophetic message. John is the lineal descendant of Micah and Habakkuk; but the beginners of prophecy never spoke so unsparingly and absolutely as did this new voice among them. Such was his self-confidence. But with it came a wonderful self-subordination. A reformer is often brave, but he is seldom humble. A prophet seldom announces that his message is incomplete. Yet here is John, summoning his nation to repentance as a master speaks to his servants, but at the same time foretelling one among them who is greater than he. He is but a voice crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." All Jerusalem and Judea flock to him at the Jordan, and there he tells them of one unnoticed young man in their midst whose shoes' latchet he is not worthy to unloose. It is a wonderful union of conflicting attributes, and there is a legend that the Christian Church commemorates it in its very date of Christmas. For many years,

years, as we know, it was the death and the resurrection of Jesus which held attention; and the time of his birth was unobserved. Finally, the tradition says, the winter solstice was the time assigned, when the days grow longer and the nights grow less, that thus in the coming of the Sun of righteousness there might be fulfilled the word of the brave and humble John: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

This reference of the whole work of the Baptist to the higher work which was to follow it is summed up in one striking contrast,—the contrast which John himself presents, of the two baptisms. "I baptize with water," says John, "but he that cometh after me is mightier than I: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Here is the transition from the forerunner to the fulfiller, from John to Jesus. The baptism by water is obviously the symbol of John's preaching of repentance. It is the washing of life clean of its stains. A man heard the word of John, "Repent, repent," and, desiring repentance, bathed in the Jordan. Washing the body meant washing the heart

heart clean of its stains. But what is this second baptism, which the Master would require,—the baptism by fire? It means not only the cleansing as of outward water but the cleansing as of an inward flame. It is a fire lighted in the heart, which shall not only burn up the old life, but shall kindle the new. It means not only washing, but inflaming and inspiring; not only purity, but passion; not only freedom from the power of evil, but baptism with the power of the Holy Ghost. Such is the step in which, John says, one passes from his discipleship to that of Christ. When a man has brought his life to repentance for that which has stained it, when he is ready to have it washed of its misdeeds, then he is indeed taking the first step toward the discipleship of Christ. He is standing by the Jordan bank, ready for the baptism of John. It is a great, a momentous, a crucial step. I suppose there were few who were brave enough to accept the ministry of the Baptist who were not thereby made ready for a hearing of the Messiah himself when he came. Yet, none the less, it is but a preparing of the way of the Lord.

Lord. The baptism which is of Christ is by fire. It is when a man commits himself, under the power of Christ, to a new passion; when there is kindled within him a flame of loyalty; when he is led out of his own repentances and regrets into the enthusiastic service of a new and a worthy aim. To be changed from confession to devotion, from self-conquests to self-consecration, from purity to passion, from the resolution not to do wrong to the loyalty to what is holy, from the struggle against error to the zeal for truth, — this is the baptism by fire.

Set these two baptisms now for a moment in contrast with each other as they affect our modern life. We see something of them in our intellectual affairs. It is a great thing when the mind is baptized by water, cleansed from error and tradition and myth, and set freely and calmly before the truth. It is what happens to many a man in his academic life. Much that once seemed true shows its inadequacy. Mistakes are outgrown, systems lose their hold, and the mind is no longer ensnared or enslaved. It is a preparing of the way for the regeneration
of

of the mind. But let a man suppose that in such a baptism his regeneration is complete, and he has received the worst harm which an education can do. He has been cleansed from error, but he has found no truth. He criticises, but he does not create. He can despise conviction, but he cannot do work which demands conviction. He has been baptized by water, but the baptism by fire has not touched his mind. Then, sometimes, into such a mind there comes by some blessed influence a passion for some way of truth, a desire toward some definite end; and with that kindling of eagerness the mind is born again. The end illuminates the task. The purpose interprets the material. When a man is thus intellectually devoted, each new book seems written for his sake and makes its unintended contribution. He is no longer the diletante or the cynic. He is the disciple of the truth. He has been baptized, not alone with water, but with fire.

Or look at the two baptisms in our social life. We try to cleanse society by our legislation and our reforms, and we do well. But in all such removal of evils
we

we are accomplishing not a completed, but a preparatory work. What saves a community is not deliverance from evil, but a newly kindled desire for good. In our own community, for instance, it happens that we have just voted that we would have no traffic in intoxicating drink. To many of us it seems a good work well done. To many it seems like a genuine baptism of the town by water. But such an enterprise only brings with it a new danger, if duty is supposed to cease with one's vote. Such legislation is but a preparing of the way of the Lord. It must be succeeded by new and more positive work, by the provision of better places of resort, by a new spirit of self-sacrifice and service, or else the law itself is sure to fail. After the baptism by water must come the baptism by fire. The disciple of John the Baptist may cast his vote, but the disciple of Jesus Christ must apply himself to the building of a Christian city.

Yet these are but suggestions of the more serious meaning which the contrast of the two baptisms was intended to convey. What John and Jesus were thinking
of

of was the salvation of men's souls from sin. Each step in this solemn process is, they say, essential. There is but one way in which a man's soul can begin to be saved. It is the way of repentance. John the Baptist summons him to put away the things that separate him from God. But, when a man has thus accepted the baptism by water, he is not yet safe. He is like one who has climbed a precipice, and lies down to sleep upon its brink. His life has been left clean by the ebbing tide of his temptation; but, if he does not forthwith bar out the waters, back they will come upon him as surely as the flood-tide of the sea. A man cannot live safely in this negative purity. His safety lies in the supplanting of the old passions by new and better ones, by the discovery of new interests which leave no room for the old. That is what the Christian life really means. It not only summons a man to repentance, but it supplies him with a new passion. A man catches sight of the personality of Jesus Christ beckoning to him from the heights of character and summoning him to his service, and a great new sense of personal loyalty and

a flame of personal trust are kindled in the disciple's heart. He has passed from the ministry of the Baptist to the ministry of the Saviour. It is not only the water that has washed him: it is fire that has touched his brow.

Would God that this great transition, in which alone is safety, might happen to some of the souls who gather here! Would God that in the common life we lead together this twofold baptism might occur! It would, indeed, be a great thing for our University if we could feel the baptism of John,—if there might be among us a cleansing from vice, a purifying of conduct, a conquest of our follies, our conceits, and our sins. But by no such controversy with evil is our common life wholly secure. What we must pray for much more deeply is not the cleansing, but the kindling power. What we need is a great tide of high and broad spiritual interests, an enlarging power of generous loyalty, the sense that we are set here together for a common service and a common end, and the responsibility, the self-respect, and the seriousness which start up thus within us like a flame. What
must

must save us is a new power of enthusiasm, a new degree of moral passion, the fire that is kindled in life when Christ touches the soul. In such a step, the life of an individual or a community is fulfilled. It has passed from the ministry of John to the discipleship of Jesus, from the baptism of water to the baptism of fire. It has kept its Advent season, and it is ready for the spirit of the coming Christmas Day.

II.

CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN.

JOHN ix. 14-38.

WE find in this chapter of John two figures standing facing each other. One of them is the familiar figure of Jesus: the other is the strange figure of the poor man, perplexed and bewildered with the very manifestation of the wonderful mercy that has come to him, perplexed about the way in which he has received that mercy and the way in which it has been recognized by those about him. There is hardly a picture more pathetic than that of this poor man to whom Christ has given his sight, and who finds himself subjected to pains and perplexities and distresses that he had never known before. Having sat a beggar all these years by the side of the road, men had tolerated him; but, the moment he was cured, they began to speak hard things of him, and to be partisans

sans over him. Perplexed and confused, and turning from those who said these hard things, and at the same time being drawn toward Jesus, not knowing what to do, he stood there in the bewilderment of his new life. Then Christ comes and stands in front of him.

Infinitely interesting must be the first words that Christ says to such a bewildered life: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" A personal question. Can we probe the whole meaning of the startling words that had come to this man in this question of the recognition of a personal deliverer who is hereafter to be his Master, his Lord? Everything else that Christ might have said to the man, all the questions that had been raised by the Pharisees, were left unsaid for the present; and there was only one question on the heart of Christ,—whether there had come to the heart of that man the personal leadership through which his life henceforth was to be strong.

There can be no real salvation to any man until it comes in a personal leadership, in a Master, by obeying whom the man's life is redeemed and saved. Truth
comes

comes then in the acceptance of the nature of one whom the truth fills, and in whom it is lodged. Law comes then in the personal will of one who is a worthy master, in whom we fulfil our own duty. Hope comes then as it shines out of the face of one who comprehends the future in his deep knowledge of the present, and opens that future to us which is so real to himself. Do you believe? is the question to the human soul. Do you accept in your own soul the certainty of God's revelation of himself in human life, that henceforth you can walk with your eye upon that revelation of God and fulfil it in yourself as it is set before you in his Son, who is manifested to be the Leader and the Master of the world? With such a Master, what is there that shall make our hearts afraid? What darkness is there in which we cannot walk, with him to lead us? What sorrow and trouble that we cannot face? What perplexity which he may not clear up, so that we shall find a road in which we can walk, when lighted by Jesus Christ? He is a Saviour and a Friend, when he saves us by making us go into the path in which he goes.

Into

Into the heart of this man there had grown something of this kind. I think there can be no deeper sign of eagerness and earnestness than there is in the words in which he answered this question of the Master: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" The words of Jesus become, first, interpretations of our own consciences; and then they become a law for our lives. There came first the consciousness that it was a personal master that he needed. If that may come, then everything is clear. Then the Pharisee may question and jeer; for there is his master, who is to be the revelation of the Infinite Love.

Then out from behind the gift there comes the giver, out from behind the mercy there comes the merciful one; and Jesus, whom he had thought of as only the agent who had given him the light, says, "I who speak unto you am he." The true revelation of life comes to us when out from behind all the good things which we enjoy there comes the divine presence of Him who has given them to us; when out from behind our perplexities there comes the true solution; when the

the past becomes significant of the future, and every mercy we receive becomes a revelation of Him who has the future in his hands, and who has us through all eternity in his own soul, and whose love is waiting for those who are ready to receive it. Let us be content with no mercy, unless it reveals the merciful one; with nothing godlike, unless God is manifested through it. When that has come, then the Lord is around us; and there is nothing which may perplex us as we go forth in our lives.

Then Jesus, turning with that wistful look which we see again and again on his face, ponders on his own mission in the world: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind,"—the need of humility to accept the Master as he reveals himself to our needs, the need of such humility because our lives are to be fulfilled in the Infinite. True humility is the great power which takes possession of the infinite future and of the unmeasured powers of our human life. It is pride, and not humility, when a man says, "I can do little, for I am a man."

man." It is humility when a man says, "I can do everything that is in the divine idea of man, because God has made man his own child, and is more and more filling him with his own fulness."

And so this man goes forward, following the Master, leaving behind him all petty quibbles about healing on the Sabbath day, and the words of his parents,— "He is of age, can speak for himself,"— and going forward into what life we cannot begin to guess, and here, as there in the eternal world, fulfilling it by the power of Jesus Christ, which has taken possession of him in his consecration to the Master. To such consecration may we look forward together,—forward into whatever life God has for us here, into whatever richer life awaits us when the gates are opened and we have passed into eternal life.

III.

THE SOIL AND THE SEED.

MATT. xiii. 1-23.

I TURN from most of the types of life with which this wonderful Parable of the Sower deals, and ask you to think, for a moment, of but one. I pass by the seeds sown by the wayside. These wayside lives are those which are hard like a road, trodden down by business or frivolity, so that there is no chance for religion. Sometimes, no doubt, we know what this impenetrability is; but it is certainly not in a hard and unresponsive mood that we are here to-day. I pass by the seed sown among thorns. These are the lives which are so overgrown and choked by other things that there is no room for religion. Sometimes, we know of this stifling of the soul; but it is certainly not because we are wholly without room for religion that we are here.

But

But when one has passed out of this spiritual hardness and out of these stifling thorns, when one has reached any clearness of religious desire, then comes another peril. It is the peril of instability, the absence of permanence, the lack of fixity in the religious life. It is not that we are unreceptive, it is not that we are choked; but it is that when God the Sower scatters His seed over our hearts it does not find stable and permanent root, so as to grow and stand and withstand in its own strength of continuous conviction. These are they which receive the word among stony places. "The same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself; and, having no depth of earth, when the sun is up, he withers away."

Now, what is it that brings about this absence of fixity and permanence in the spiritual life? The parable names two things. One is lack of earth, the other is lack of root. Sometimes there is no depth of soil. A life is soft on the surface, but hard just below. It is quick with emotion, but shallow in sentiment. It finds in religion an excitement, a recreation;

ation ; but its religion, like the rest of its resources, is a thin, superficial, and unpenetrating thing. There is no harder class to reach with any good than this, for there is nothing in which any seed can fasten itself. There is no depth of earth.

Then there are other lives which have no fixity, because they have no root in themselves ; and the reason they have no root in themselves is that they are trying to have a root which is not in themselves. They are like those plants which we call parasites. The moment they begin to grow, they run along the ground to the nearest tree, and throw their tendrils round it and draw their life from it. Such parasitism is always a peril of academic life. A few self-confident men stand here over against a multitude of self-distrustful men ; and the life of the many tends to run for its opinions, its precedents, its beliefs and unbeliefs, to the life of the few. A glimpse of truth shines down upon a young man ; and, instead of letting it warm and deepen his own life, he runs to see what the books and the masters have to say. A suggestion of duty opens
before

before a young man's soul ; and he turns to examine the traditions, the customs, and the prevailing sentiment of the place. It is, thus, at once the great blessing and the great peril of such lives as we lead here that we are brought into contact with leaders. It is a great thing to find a master, to discover one's humble place in the procession of learners, to have the corrective influence of the history of disciplined minds. But all this is for evil, if it mislead a life out of its healthy method of growth, and make it draw its life from other roots than those which are its own. The learning of the past and the authority of the present fulfil their work only as they teach each mind to grow in its own way. The method of God with each soul is a new method. It cannot be borrowed from another mind. It is a revelation to the individual. A fixed and stable growth in personal conviction is not the life of a parasite : it is the growth from a root which is in one's self.

Finally, how is this fixity obtained ? It demands, answers the parable, two factors,—the soil and the seed. The one is man's contribution : the other is God's.

Many

Many people think that one element is enough,— a cultivated soil. Let a man cultivate himself, and he will be strong. It is not necessarily so. Sometimes, self-culture contributes to fixity of life. Sometimes, it seems to have less permanent hold on the things which remain than ignorance possesses. The fact is that culture does for a man what it does for a field. It prepares and deepens the soil for the coming of the sower. A man who leaves his ploughed ground unsown has not fulfilled his work. He has depth of earth, but no crop. But let God the Sower come, moving across men's lives as Jesus saw the man striding through the furrows of Galilee, and then the soil that has been loosened and deepened by the processes of culture is the soil that gladdens the Sower's heart. Thus it is that culture and religion, the intellectual and the religious life, man's work and God's, meet. Soil and seed, each has its part. Often, the seed grows in uncultured places ; but it grows best and deepest in the prepared mind. Let a man neglect the culture of his mind, and he is neglecting the preparation for receiving his God. Let a man
think

think that his self-culture is his crop, and his life is but a ploughed field without a harvest. The large results of life appear when the two elements meet,—when the life of man has made itself ready for the life of God, and the descending life of God finds depths of earth within the life of man.

Would God that it might be so with some of us to-day! The processes of self-culture occupy us much. They have occupied the hours of this day. What have we done? We have been preparing the soil of life. We have been digging out its stones of error, and deepening its powers of receptivity. We ought to have gained, to-day, some increased depth of earth. And now for what do we wait? We wait for God the Sower to scatter over us in these quieter moments of reflection and communion His seeds of influence, the infinitely minute thoughts, hopes, memories, ambitions, and ideals in which He utters himself, and which have such marvellous power of growth. Let the Sower come. Let our hearts lay themselves bare for His visitation. Let Him turn us from our unstable, unfixed, and
parasitic

parasitic living, that we may receive into prepared lives these germs of a stable growth, so that there may come to pass in us that growth which is like the normal growth of nature,—quiet and slow, patient and unassuming, out of a depth of prepared soil, out of a root which is in itself, and, finally, with the fruit after our varied capacity, some thirty, some sixty, and some, in God's own time, a hundred fold.

IV.

GOD OUR ROCK.

PSALM xviii. 31.

THIS figure of God as a rock runs all the way through the Old Testament. It is a favorite figure, not only with David, but with all these writers from the earliest to the latest of the prophets. The foundation of a man's life, that which he is to build on, is the Lord Almighty. Man's sense of God, of his connection with God, is to be the foundation of his life, is to be his rock. The figure is often an inconvenient one, as when the rock is made to travel from place to place. It is not always poetic; but it is so certain that life must have a foundation, that these writers return to this figure again and again, often when it seems awkward.

The ancient mythology had the world standing upon an elephant, and the elephant standing on a tortoise; but what does

does the tortoise stand on? There must be a foundation. All life must have a foundation. With these Hebrew poets, the statement is absolute that a man's life is founded upon the Living God, upon his sense of the being of this God, "I Am," the Existent. This consciousness that one rests upon the original "existence" is the foundation of life.

In the New Testament, the Saviour takes it up, and urges it intensely and earnestly, and wishes us to live by this sense of God. At the end of the "Sermon on the Mount" is the man who builds his house upon a rock,—that man is sure; and also the man who builds upon the sand,—that man is not sure. When Peter makes the great central statement to Jesus, "Thou art not a messenger, thou art the Son of God," Jesus says to him, "Yes, and this is the foundation that I build upon." Man is the Son of God; that is the foundation.

My friends, we all of us come back to the same necessity: there must be a foundation. Why do I do this? Why do I study to-day? Why did I play yesterday? Why am I going to New York? We
work

work back and back through a series of reasons: there must be something behind it all. We must come to some foundation on which our life rests. If the Bible is authority, if Jesus Christ is authority, this foundation for the life of every man and woman is the sense of God; and, more than this, the sense that we are the children of this God, that we partake of his nature. We come back to the feeling that we are his divine children. We are not the manufacture of his hands. We are not the mere creatures of his wisdom. We are the children born of his nature, and share that nature. Is God a creator? So are we. Is God immortal? So are we. Can God love with infinite love? So can we. We share the being of God, we live in his life. He is our Rock and our Foundation.

We cannot enter upon a religious life without some sense or thought of this relationship to him. That is what the Scriptures speak of as faith. In the Old Testament, the word translated "faith" always bears an etymological reference to a rock foundation on which a man builds. He builds on a rock; that is, he is certain that
he

he is founded on God, that he lives because God lives. "I Am" is the name of God. "I Am" is the name of God's children. Man inherits his being from God, from whom he is born. If we take the Bible as authority, if we take Jesus Christ as authority, here is to be the foundation upon which we are to live,—the Infinite Being whom we cannot help seeing and knowing.

I look out upon Orion, and ask, What is beyond? What is beyond Arcturus? What is beyond the furthest space? There is being, there is existence. So much is clear. Then the Saviour of mankind says to us that this Being is *conscious* Being, that this Being knows us and we may know him, that this Being loves us and we may love him. Our foundation, that which we build upon, is the Conscious Being in which worlds move, in which trees grow, in which seasons pass, in which all things are.

That is our Rock; and religion is our effort to come into relation with this Being, to listen to what he says to us, to tell him what we would say to him. We may give wider definitions to religion in our duties
to

to each other ; but what we call personal religion, the religion of a man's life, is the effort to draw nearer to God, to know him, to listen to what he has to say, to tell him what is in our heart. It is that which brings us here this afternoon or in the chapel service in the morning ; it is to gain that, that we pray ; and it is that by which we trust him in the hour of joy or sorrow. We seek to know him, and build our lives upon this Rock of Ages.

V.

CHRIST AND NATHANAEL.

JOHN i. 43-51.

LET me ask you to think for a few moments on the very interesting character brought before us in these verses, —one of the most interesting of those characters in the Gospel which are drawn with a few touches, and yet stand out very clearly in the picture. They are very distinctly before us, not because they are elaborately drawn, but because their natures are so simple. Nathanael, one of these disciples, has a singular freshness, loveliness, and beauty about him, which, I am sure, always attracts us to him. I feel as if Jesus himself must have loved him peculiarly. He came so freshly and naturally to Christ, he entered so completely into his ideas, and made himself so naturally and so readily his disciple. There was just enough questioning to indicate

dicating the activity of an earnest mind. At the same time there was a readiness to give himself to that Jesus who presented himself to him, and seemed to be the light for which he had been yearning.

These short conversations seem to be full of interest, as they lead us on from the beginning to the end of a young man's history, who in the first place is seen looking after the truth, and in the end is seen consecrating himself to Christ.

Think how naturally these speeches follow each other. The first is the address of a young man to a fellow-student engaged in that occupation which draws men more and more closely to each other; for there is nothing, I think, that can bring men so earnestly together as the common search after truth. Common circumstances, the common search for advantage, have something to do in bringing men together; but, when you take men of kindred mind and heart, joined in the great search after truth, following it with the deepest enthusiasm with which men can follow, then how closely such souls are drawn to each other! Philip and Nathanael had lived together, and sought together
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for the fulfilment of the prophecy written in the ancient history of Israel. Vague and unrealized it was before them, yet they felt it was to be fulfilled in some way and in some time. They had grown together in this common wish. They had told each other of their common hopes. Each one had some glimpse of that which was coming ; and now, at last, one of them comes and says : "The search is at last satisfied : that for which we have been seeking is found. We have found him who was expected, who was foretold by the prophets."

Philip comes and tells Nathanael, as if he would immediately share that which he had learned with one who was as dear to him as his own soul, as if the truth could not be his until he had imparted it. There can be no richer moment in any man's life than when he is able to help forward the search for truth, and to impart to others the truth which he has himself received. And so these young men stand out with great simplicity, and yet with great richness, in their relationship one with another, Philip finding Nathanael, and saying to him : "We have found him
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of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. The Messiah has at last come."

Then see how Nathanael receives Jesus at the representation of Philip. We see how intelligent he was, and yet how ready and receptive. He does not dispense with his criticism. He does not fail to say to his friend that his word does not entirely satisfy his anticipations. It was not from poor, despised Nazareth, but somewhere upon the heights of Jerusalem, that that new truth was going to shine. That a man who has been longing for the truth in one place should be disturbed when it shows itself in another; that that which he thought was one of the conditions of finding the truth should prove, when the truth comes in some other way, not to be essential,—that is very perplexing. A man would not be thoughtful and intelligent if it were not so. Yet, when Philip turns to Nathanael, and says, "Come and see; come and look upon this man, and see whether he be not the Messiah; come and look upon his truth, and let it relate itself to your soul, and see whether it be not what we have been seeking for," then
come

come forward the candor, the largeness, the receptivity, of the man. He goes with his friend with an objection in his soul, but with a determination that it shall not stand in the way of his receiving the truth. No petty objection about Nazareth shall come between him and the Messiah. He will look into his eyes; and, if Jesus reveals himself to his soul, and lays hold upon him with a grasp with which the Messiah may take hold of the Jew who has been waiting for him, he will become his disciple.

And so he comes into his presence; and Jesus says, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Israel meant something divine to the Saviour. It meant some great idea. He was looking in vain in the faces about him to find it fulfilled. When this young man came to him here, with his earnestness and enthusiasm and candor, seeking the truth, anxious to have his questions answered, and Jesus saw all this in his face, he said: "Here is the Israelite whom I have been looking for; here is the true Jew who has been waiting for my coming; here is the great family which the Son may bring to
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IV.

GOD OUR ROCK.

PSALM xviii. 31.

THIS figure of God as a rock runs all the way through the Old Testament. It is a favorite figure, not only with David, but with all these writers from the earliest to the latest of the prophets. The foundation of a man's life, that which he is to build on, is the Lord Almighty. Man's sense of God, of his connection with God, is to be the foundation of his life, is to be his rock. The figure is often an inconvenient one, as when the rock is made to travel from place to place. It is not always poetic; but it is so certain that life must have a foundation, that these writers return to this figure again and again, often when it seems awkward.

The ancient mythology had the world standing upon an elephant, and the elephant standing on a tortoise; but what does

does the tortoise stand on? There must be a foundation. All life must have a foundation. With these Hebrew poets, the statement is absolute that a man's life is founded upon the Living God, upon his sense of the being of this God, "I Am," the Existent. This consciousness that one rests upon the original "existence" is the foundation of life.

In the New Testament, the Saviour takes it up, and urges it intensely and earnestly, and wishes us to live by this sense of God. At the end of the "Sermon on the Mount" is the man who builds his house upon a rock,—that man is sure; and also the man who builds upon the sand,—that man is not sure. When Peter makes the great central statement to Jesus, "Thou art not a messenger, thou art the Son of God," Jesus says to him, "Yes, and this is the foundation that I build upon." Man is the Son of God; that is the foundation.

My friends, we all of us come back to the same necessity: there must be a foundation. Why do I do this? Why do I study to-day? Why did I play yesterday? Why am I going to New York? We
work

the richness of the Christian life,—that it is simply laying hold on something which has been from the beginning of our existence, something which has been pressing upon our lives.

You remember those great words of Paul, in which he describes the fulness of his life. He had such a multitude of great phrases in which he put the richness of his life ; and this, I think, is one of them : “I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Christ.” That seems rich and great. Christ Jesus apprehended me, that I might apprehend Christ Jesus ; that, realizing the divine force, the great powers that have been from the beginning at work upon my life, I may be able to respond to them, to lay hold on, to apprehend them as they have apprehended me. There are forces vaster than we know of that are apprehending us. God has put forth all the power that is needful to put forth. There is nothing for us to do but to respond with a large consecration, that we may grasp the highest manifestation of that divine love which it is possible for us to lay hold on.

And then note the last word which
Jesus

Jesus says, when Nathanael has declared himself his disciple. Impressed by the manner in which he has entered into discipleship, Jesus says: "Do not think that you have exhausted all; do not think that this little beginning is the whole. Hereafter, you shall see greater things than this." Know that every point of life which we have reached, just in proportion as it is pure and holy, is the beginning of the infinite life. Be sure that God has so much more for the soul as it goes on, becoming richer and richer; that every new relationship of the soul with God is not merely a sign of thankfulness for that which is passed, but a new opening of our nature, into which God shall pour more and more of himself. In each new consecration, some new gift becomes possible, and for that new gift some new consecration becomes necessary, and in that new consecration comes some new gift. So this everlasting reciprocity goes on, each new gift bringing new consecration, and each new consecration making a new gift possible. So the soul goes on entering into God, and receiving God unto himself. "Because I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."

VI.

SEMBLANCE OR REALITY.

MARK viii. 10-24.

OUR Lord had gone into the village of Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to him. He took him by the hand, and touched his eyes, and asked him if he saw anything. The answer was, "I see men as trees walking." He had not been born blind. He knew men, and knew trees. He knew that these were not trees, and he did not act toward them as if they were trees. He acted upon what he knew, and treated them as men. Judging merely by appearance, he might have been tempted to climb into them or cut them down; but, judging by the knowledge he had, he could greet them as men, and receive a greeting from them in return.

This is the only one of our Lord's miracles which is divided. I do not know why it is divided, except to teach us the incompleteness

incompleteness of life and the inconsistencies between the things we know and the things we see; to teach us to judge by our knowledge rather than by the outward appearance. We are familiar with the line that "things are not what they seem." It would be a very dismal truth, were we not able to enlarge it with another truth,—that, whatever things may seem to us, we are not subject to the appearances, but are able to control our conduct by our knowledge of realities.

This becomes true in many different relations in life. I have that knowledge of my friend which makes him perfectly trustworthy. I can depend upon him for everything; but, some day, he does something that is not compatible with that friendship. Shall I give him up or trust him still? I have a conception of a hero, with a tall, commanding figure, with dignity upon his brow; but, when I see him, he is a short man, with low brow, and nothing of grandeur about him. Shall I give up my idea of heroism, or say, in spite of everything, that he is a hero still? I act from what I know. I interpret the appearance by that reality which I knew before

before I saw the appearance. Our familiar saying that we judge men by their actions is not more true than the other necessity, that we judge actions by their men. We are continually compelled to interpret that which appears by that which we saw before the appearance.

Carry this into the ethical relations of life. Duty seems to a man, when he is alone, meditating in his house by himself, to be the "stern daughter of the Voice of God"; but, when he ventures out into the street, it has lost some of its grandeur, not exhibiting any such authority and not receiving any such homage. When a man thinks about truth in the morning, the truth seems to him to be pure and sacred. He looks out upon life, feeling that his sword shall never be drawn but in her defence, repeating the words of John Pym, "I would rather suffer for speaking the truth than that the truth should suffer for want of my speaking." Then he goes out into life, and sees that truth is different in the maxims of men. Truth speaks, and men do not listen to it; and he finds himself tempted not to listen with that deference which he thought in the morning he should pay.

Charity,


Charity, too, seems so divine in the morning. He thinks of the glory of living for others; and he says, The value of my life is in its service. He goes out again into the world, and he finds himself tempted to be selfish and grasping; and he forgets that he was not to live, not to strive, for himself. Shall he be governed by truth as it is on the street, by charity as it appears in the conflicts of the world? Or shall he be governed by duty as he knows duty, by truth as he knows it in the sincerity in which he has seen it, and by charity in that reality which he has found in his own closet?

It is thus that we need to be on our guard, lest we take our conceptions from appearances, and do violence to the higher knowledge which we have. For man has the realization of the highest things in the life of the men to whom he pays his most reverent respect; he has the teachings of God's Word; he has the teachings of the spirit of truth and duty and charity, the teachings of an unseen spirit. And, if he is wise, he will be governed by what he knows, and will not treat men as trees, because in the mists of the world a man
seems

seems to be a tree. He will govern himself by the reality which he possesses rather than by the semblance which the world offers.

There is a common impression that men seem to be better than they are. For one, I do not believe it. I think men are better than they seem. I think it is a rare man who shows the best of himself to the world, his deepest convictions, his highest conceptions of duty, his most profound belief in charity, and who lives out the deepest and holiest thoughts which he has in the midst of the world that needs, though it may not ask, this gift.

If we are to give anything to the world, it must be by this strength of our personal devotion, throwing down in the midst of these shadows and semblances the reality of truth and duty and charity, as we have seen these things. For we are old enough and wise enough to make no serious mistake in life. We know enough never to treat a tree as if it were a man, and always to treat a man as if he were not a tree. Realities,—things as we know them,—these are to possess us and to control our lives.



VII.

THE SINCERITY OF GOD.

2 COR. i. 12.

PERHAPS of all the qualities in a noble character, this of sincerity is the most widely and deeply interesting. There are many men who do not care much for piety; that is, for the distinct recognition and worship of God. They do not care much for saints; that is, for those who walk by and commune with the unseen. There are many men who do not value as they should the qualities of gentleness, patience, and silent equanimity; and yet all these men would be found to respond most heartily and most fully to this grand quality of sincerity. The reason seems to be this: that, for the just appreciation of the first named qualities, a certain degree of moral experience, of spiritual cultivation, seems necessary; whereas, all that is needed for the appreciation

preciation of sincerity is simply the full equipment of a man, the possession of large human instincts. Bring a great singer, say Jenny Lind, before some large popular audience, and ask her to sing what she considers her best piece. It will be appreciated very intensely and very deeply by a few ; but it will be beyond the majority in that gathering, it will presuppose more musical cultivation than they possess. But now ask her to sing a song from Moore or Burns ; and the appreciation is universal, deep, intense, and the response marvellous. The reason is that in the first case there is presumed more culture than exists. In the second case, all that is necessary for appreciation is human instinct, human sympathy. So with this quality of sincerity : all that is necessary to the appreciation of its worth is simply the heart and soul and nature of man.

Now, this quality, so deeply interesting to young life, is defined for us by the apostle, in the very words that he uses, —sincerity of God. He means, by sincerity, testing one's self by the light of God's life, and, in the test, finding one's self

self approved. You step into a store : you see what seems to be a beautiful vase. As you look at it standing before you, it seems perfectly sound. You want to know whether the appearance and the reality correspond,—whether it is just what it seems to be. You take it up, and hold it between you and the light. The light flows through it. If there is any flaw, any stain, spot, or defect, it will be revealed. If it is perfect, if it is sound and fine, that will also be revealed.

Now, the apostle says that we need to bring ourselves into the presence of God, and hold ourselves up in his light, and let the light of his character stream through us. And then, as we look at ourselves, illuminated by the radiance of his being, all the defects and flaws and stains and spots in our nature, if there are any, will stand out before us clear and recognizable. And, if we are fine and really sound through and through, that fineness and that soundness will also appear in that same light: we are tested by the light, and found true.

This definition of sincerity will explain to us a very common phenomenon in our life,—

life,—that a great many men sincerely say they are sincere when they are not sincere. The reason is that they test themselves by inadequate light. You step into a store to buy you a shade for your lamp. You see it on the counter before you; and it appears to be, as in the previous case, perfectly sound. You take it home, and place it over your burning light; and that light flowing through it shows that it is practically useless. Tested by one degree of light, it was all right; tested by another, it was all wrong. Now, we look at ourselves, judge ourselves, in the twilight of a crude moral sense, in the twilight of a crude social conscience. Because we cannot see the stain and the flaw and the spot and the defect in ourselves by that light, we conclude that we are sound. Yet if we set the spirit of God in our hearts, the spirit of the Master of Christendom in the interior of our nature, and let the illumination of his life pour forth, our secret and hidden faults will stand out; and we, who before thought we were sincere, sound, true to the core, will find ourselves false and unworthy.

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The end of these few remarks and the object toward which I am drifting is this : that quality which we think can be cultivated by an atheistical nature, which we think can be cultivated in separation from the Supreme Being, in the apostle's view, and according to his definition, leads us to God just as surely as the saint's faith leads to him. For, just as the man who makes a vase makes it in the sunlight, and his idea of fineness and soundness is taken up and expanded and purified by the sunlight, and the sunlight is his standard of a successful approach to a perfect embodiment of his idea, so we come into the presence of Christ, through whom the radiance of God's nature streams on the world ; and our idea of soundness and fineness is taken up and purified and enlarged immeasurably by his action upon us. We test ourselves by him, and see, as we are in his presence, whether or not we are approaching more and more to the perfect embodiment of the idea of sincerity in our individual life.

This to me is very interesting. As I hinted at the outset, it seems to me that the very blood of youth is all aglow and
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on fire with the appreciation of this quality of sincerity,—as if a young man would die sooner than give up the thought of the ultimate complete possession of soundness of soul. And yet, for him to gain that quality in its completeness, he must have a model. He must work in the presence of that model, just as the artist does, just as the poet does, just as the man who wishes to attain excellence in any line of life must work in the presence of an ideal.

So this sincerity, if we earnestly desire to possess it, leads us into the presence of the ideally sincere man, that our ideal of it may be glorified by him and our progress into the possession of it be more and more assured.

Is not this a grand faith to have,—to be tested by the eternal light and found true; illuminated by the central radiance of the moral and spiritual universe, to find ourselves, in that eternal light, flawless, stainless, spotless, and pure? It seems to me a most inspiring faith for any one to have. Let us pursue it with the energy and zeal and enthusiasm and manliness of young life, led by the passion for it into
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the presence of the Son of God, seeking through him to bring the eternal light into our human lives. Let this be our faith and our endeavor,—to be tested by the eternal light, and found true.

VIII.

OPENING THE DOOR.

REV. iii. 20.

I WANT to pause before this wonderful image of Christ standing at the door of human life, and asking, like a weary traveller, to be let in. It seems to set before us the two ways in which a man may stand over against the possibilities and opportunities of his life. One way is as if we stood outside of these possibilities, trying to get in to them: the other way is as if they stood outside, and were trying to get in to us. Under the one view, we stand at their door and knock, if perchance they will let us in: under the other view, they stand knocking at our door, if perchance we can hear their voice, and let them in. The first view of life is the common one. Its possibilities seem hidden from us under lock and key, and we give ourselves with all our efforts to

to unlocking them. We are like the besiegers of a city full of treasure. The money and the successes which we seek lie within, and we stand not so much knocking at their door as battering at their gate and scaling their wall.

This, I say, is the common way of looking at our life,—the way of attack and struggle and victory; and perhaps it is the only way in which one can regard many of the problems of his money-getting and his competitive success. But, when we turn to the deeper experiences of life, the other way begins to open. Truth, beauty, love, wisdom, peace, forgiveness,—of these things, which are the great possessions of human life, it is not so true to say that they hide themselves from us as that we hide ourselves from them, and will not let them in.

Take, for instance, any scientific discovery, such as the electric light which illuminates our streets. There it has been,—this wonderful power of electricity, surrounding human life with its possibilities of usefulness, and knocking at the doors of scientific men since science began; and, at last, a few men are able to hear
this

this persistent knocking, and open their doors, and then these inventions of electricity find their way into our affairs. We call it a new force, but it is not a new force. It is only a new awakening of the mind to understand a force which has been always bearing upon us. It is almost terrible to think of the many other secrets of the universe which must be thus still knocking at our doors, and waiting to get in to us, and to imagine how senseless and unreceptive we must seem to an omniscient mind, when so many blessings meant for us are beaten back from our closed minds and wills. And think, still further, how it is that such truth does reach men when it reaches them at all. It is not by lying idle and passive for its approaches. It is not without effort and discipline that such insight arrives. No: it is by training the mind, so that it can open its doors. This is the end of education,—the opening of the door of the mind. It is the making one's self quick with receptivity toward truth, so that, when truth speaks, we hear its voice, and recognize it as the voice of truth, and let it in. Most men are so sluggish that they
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do not hear the knock: many men are so feeble that they cannot open the door. But, when a truth is first heard and then welcomed, then it is that a great discovery is made. We say that the man discovered the truth; but, to the man himself, it is as if the truth spoke to him, and he had heard its voice, and let it in.

The same thing is true in a man's relations to his duty. When we have to determine between right and wrong, we are apt to take refuge in the idea that it is hard to find out what is right, that our duty hides from us, and that we are trying to find out what it is; and, because it does not let us in when we are knocking at its door, therefore we make our mistakes and commit our sins. But the fact is that this is very rarely true. If we set ourselves, with a perfectly open mind, to see what is right and to discover what is wrong, it is one of the rarest things in the world that duty is not made clear. How do we act? We do not honestly try for this one end alone. We shut out from ourselves this clear distinction. We mingle it with other motives. We do what is wrong, and pretend to ourselves that it is right.

right. We think that what is manifestly wrong will change itself some day into right. I suppose that even great crimes come about thus. A man in his business moves step by step into fraudulent practices, until at last both he and society are smitten with a great disgrace; and yet, at every step, he defends himself with the assertion that he has done nothing wrong. He blurs his sense of right. It is not that his duty is not there, but that he will not hear its voice. It is knocking at his door; but he pretends that there is no knocking, and bars himself against the summons. And then, at last, he looks back over the whole awful series of slight perversions of the right, and sees that at each step his duty stood before his life, plain and persuasive, if only he would have heard its voice, and let it in. There is no greater self-deception than this imagining that it is hard to find out what it is right to do. The difficulty lies not in the revelation of the right to us, but in the opening of ourselves to the revelations of the right. Duty stands, for the most part, close at hand, unobscured, simple, immediate. If any man has the will to hear her

her voice, to him is she willing to enter, and be his ready guest.

Now, this which is true in the world of thought and in the world of duty is—as I want to say, with even more of seriousness—true of the largest relations in which we find ourselves,—the relations of the religious life. When we first think of religion, it seems to us a matter full of difficulty. God seems to hide Himself, and we seem to be searching for Him with our books and our learning amid the mysteries of His hiding-place. Christ seems to us a problem which we have to solve, and which has perplexed the wisest of inquirers. The blessings of the religious life, such as the forgiveness of our sins, seem to be kept under lock and key, as though we were knocking at the door of a severe Divinity and asking, as suppliants, to be let in. But what is the truth about religion? The great and awful truth—awful in its stupendous simplicity—is this: that these infinite blessings are seeking us before ever we searched for them, and are waiting, not for our proof, but simply for our acceptance. We think we discover, verify, and prove them. Scholars knock at their
door

door with the books which solve these problems; and, indeed, there are mysteries enough to satisfy all learning and research. But the deepest mystery of all is this: that, if the love of God, the power of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, are to have any reality for us, it must be as living and active forces knocking at our doors and asking to be let in. How are we to think of God? It must be as always accessible, if we would but have it so, searching for us before ever we searched for him. We love Him because He first loved us. When we turn to Him, it is but our answer to His call to us. It is the father of the prodigal, — waiting with an infinite patience and love, and coming to meet us, if we will but turn even with faltering step, and make ourselves accessible to Him. How are we to think of Christ? Behind all aspects of Him as the problem of the ages, and all the perplexity of His wondrous personality, lies the power of His practical and present leadership. We do not first find Him, but He finds us. It is not the sheep which look for the shepherd: it is the shepherd who searches for the sheep; and, when they hear his voice, they follow

follow him. Even so Christ calls to men : "Behold, I stand at your door and knock. If you will not hear my voice, I cannot enter ; but, if any man will hear my voice, I will come in." And how shall we think of that forgiveness of our sins for which we pray? It, too, is waiting for us,—waiting with the infinite pathos with which a parent waits for his sinning child, knocking at our door, if we will but let it in. There is nothing complicated or mechanical or unnatural about the forgiveness of sins. There is only one thing that forbids it. It is the locked door of our own hearts.

See, then, the wonderful simplicity of religion. Here, on the one hand, are our own lives, shut in, limited, and self-absorbed ; and here, on the other hand, are these great powers of the universe, wanting to get in to us, and between the two only one barrier,—the barrier of our own wills. What a terrific thought it is that the spirit of God is forever thus trying to reach us, and that the power of a Christian life is standing like a weary traveller knocking at our door!

God grant that in these moments of
withdrawal,

withdrawal, when we turn from the stir of our busy lives to the quietness of this place, there may be a little of this opening of the doors of our wills to these heavenly visitants! It is not a work that makes a noise or sensation,—this unbarring of one's life. It is not a work that one man can do for another, or that can be preached or forced into a life. No power—not that of God Himself—can open that door from the outside. Only the soul itself can open itself. But if, with perfect simplicity and unaffectedness, any one of us is able just to put aside the bolt of his own wilfulness, and open his door and say: "Almighty God, come into me! Spirit of Christ, be thou my guest! Father, I have sinned, forgive me,"—then it is as if these sharper days of winter were melting into the approaching spring, and as if one of us came down some morning in his heated house, and should throw his door open to the gentler air, and there should flow in upon him the milder freshness and the purer fragrance of a renewing and reviving world.

IX.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.

ROM. xii. 3-9.

I SPOKE yesterday of Paul's practical way of putting Christian duty. I want now to remind this congregation of the way in which Paul always chooses to speak to us as members of the great body, as linked together as brothers and sisters in the world. He never chooses to speak to any man as if any man could be alone. We bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The human race is the individual, of which men and women are the separate organs and members. That is the way Fichte put it eighteen hundred years after Paul had said the same thing, and one may say that it was because Fichte felt and knew this that he got that hold on the German nation which led it so fast and so far. In this way, I mean, he got
hold

hold of student life, and showed to those young men that they were not at work for themselves, but that they must touch elbows and work in and for the great company of mankind. There are other prophets and other poets, who will tell you to eat out your own heart, to look in upon your own soul, and to take care of yourself alone, as if there could be a lonely Christian. But it is not Paul that says that. He is always speaking for the company,—for the kingdom of heaven, as he calls it,—for you and me as belonging to that company, and so working for that kingdom.

I once heard Dr. Furness say that he knew no distinguished author writing on the Christian life and work, who, if he were brought up under an absolute monarchy, ever could express or ever could understand what Jesus Christ meant by the kingdom of God. A man who is brought up under the absolute monarchies of the Old World is constantly thinking of this great commander, of the field-marshal who commands the lieutenant-general, of the major-general who commands the brigadier-general, and so on all the way down ;
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but the Christian idea is that of a Christian Commonwealth. It is stated so distinctly in Paul's address, when he spoke of all conditions of men as being of one blood. We are all of one blood, with that great primogeniture, in which Jesus Christ is the first-born of our inheritance, and the first brother of our family; and we are all members of one family, of which God is the single head. What Paul pleads for and urges is that you and I shall take hold in that family; that we shall do something for its good, its behoof; that we shall count ourselves as of one birth and one blood.

I am speaking to many gentlemen who must determine before many months are over in what way they shall teach the world, in what profession they will work, what career they will seek for themselves, how they will try to live for their fellow-men. I have read here the passage in which Paul refers to the celebrated episode in Roman history, when Menenius Agrippa met the great secession of the *plebs*, which we should call their great strike. Agrippa told them the story of the belly and the members,—that each
member

member is necessary to each ; and Paul repeats that lesson.

And this is Paul's statement all along, of what this Christian Church should be into which you and I are born. We are born Christians, thank God ; and we must enter into this service, a common service with each other. It is for any man, in choosing his vocation, to recall this and ask how he is to be of service to other men. It is impossible to maintain his allegiance to God, and go into any calling in which he would not be of service to others. And if any man were to come to me, and ask for the advice which after forty years of life I could give to him, I should bid him find some way in which the education he has here received shall be of use to those around him. He is the interpreter of the wisdom, the knowledge, the training of the past to those who have not been so fortunate as we are here. He has spent four years here, to give to these men and women around him the benefit of this past, which has been speaking to us all through all the ages. And that lesson is taught all through the New Testament. It is the lesson of the Church
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of Christ. Not as if that Church were any mechanical organization, into which any man could come through this method or that method. It is the great company of the sons of the living God, in which each one must do his part. Be it for the teaching, the amusement, or the service of others, we must wait on our teaching, wait on our ministry, wait on our prophesying. We are false to the relations of children of God, we are false to what the past has done for us, if we do not find our place in carrying such lessons and such love to those around us and to the future.

X.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

MATT. iv. 1-11.

THERE is hardly anything more interesting, more delightful, I think, in all the Gospels, than the air of exuberant and exultant youth that fills them. There is no touch of old age upon them anywhere. The old men of the Gospels — the Zachariahs and the Simeons — stand in the background of the abundant and overwhelming youth and life that are in the stories from the beginning to the end. The young Christ stands surrounded by a circle of his young apostles, and in the power and life of these young men lies the conversion of the world. It is wonderful to see how this spirit of youth goes everywhere, so that everything is of the sunrise and of the morning. Everything is looking forward, anticipating new life in the world. The very death in which
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the Gospel closes is the birth of a new life.

So, in the passage I read, the temptation of our Lord is temptation as it comes in the strength of youth, as it comes in the exuberance and fulness of the life of this young man as he goes into the desert. It is not the stripping down of life: it is the stocking of life for that which it has to do. It lies in the very way in which the beginning of the temptation of Jesus is told: "Then was Jesus led up *of the spirit* into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil,"—that spirit which carried forth his life and inspired it for the work which it had to do. It was by that spirit that he was led into the mountain of temptation, as into the mountain of transfiguration, or the mountain of the sermon, or the mountain of prayer. Thus, in the life of Jesus, the temptation that is revealed becomes a true part of the man's life. It becomes a true portion of the development of his consciousness for the preparation and fulfilment of his work.

Yet it is not at the same time true that temptation is the same for every man. The temptation of Jesus has something
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in common with our own life. It makes him our brother in that life ; and yet how high it stands above the temptations which we have ! There is no temptation from the senses, from the lower life, or toward the indulgence which seeks a lower gratification. It is in the higher portions of his life that Jesus meets with the power which tempts him, and by resisting which he grows into his strength. Every man's temptation is in proportion to his nature.

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread,"—an appeal to the growing God-consciousness that was in Jesus, an appeal to the divine potency that was in him to do great things in his work in this world.

Then the second temptation, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down ; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee,"—an appeal to the son-consciousness of Jesus. If you are really the Son of God, why do you not use that sonship so that even no exposure can become dangerous or harmful to you ? Why do you not use it for your comfort and self-satisfaction ?

And then the last and the greatest of
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the temptations, "All these things will I give thee,"—as he stands upon the mountain and looks forth upon the world,—"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Thou hast come, O Christ, for the redemption of the world; thou hast come to save this world from its sins, to make it divine, to make it what the Father designed it to be. Thou shalt have all these things, all the great and glorious things that thy love for man desires, if thou wilt only consent to attain thy purpose by worshipping me.

Can there be any greater temptations than these? Can they come to any but a noble nature? When to the consciousness of association and affiliation with God, when to the great desires and purposes which glow in a generous young man's heart, the devil comes and makes this appeal, it is at once a tribute to the nobleness of the nature of him whom he tempts. And the glory of Christ's resistance is that he appeals from the temptations which assail the higher parts of his nature to the God supporting and sustaining that nature: he appeals from the
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temptation to tempt God to the greater power that is in him to trust God. He does not go down from the heights of his nature, that he may be able to escape from this temptation: he goes on to a deeper trust and more entire reliance, a higher fulfilment of the life that is in him.

So what does he bring forth out of his temptation? and what are we to bring forth from our temptations, in whatever region of life we may be? These same things that Jesus brought forth, and which seem to show how much of that which was great in him during his youth had come to its fulness and consummation there. He came forth certainly with these three things in him from that time forward,—these three things, which may we not see ourselves in him to-day, in virtue of that temptation which he conquered? He came down with a certain confidence in God, with a certain confidence in the power which had held him when he was tempted. He came down with a consciousness of himself and of the mission to which he was sent. He came down with a sympathy for those who, in
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any part of their nature, may be tempted. What great things are these! What great things are these shining in the face of Jesus as he comes down! What great things are these in the life of any man who has met a temptation as Christ met his, and has conquered it! the consciousness of God, the consciousness of ourselves and our mission, and the most tender sympathy of our brother in the temptations he has to meet. I know nothing that a man has to encounter which will need anything more than the calling forth into fuller life of those things which Jesus gained in this great victory.

God help you, brother, then to do something more than to resist your temptations. God help you to do something more than simply to come down as if you had resisted an enemy. God help you to come forth, not merely strong, but stronger; not merely having kept the strength you have, but having been filled with a new and inspiring strength which subsists in these three great things which have taken possession of your soul,—your consciousness that God is over you, that
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the power of God is in you, and that every one led into temptation is the child of God.

Was Christ tempted again? He certainly was; but I am sure the power gained in this temptation comes up in all the other trials. Never can we forget that trial, or be too grateful for it. Never can it cease to be a help to his children, who feel the weakness of their lives, and yet need to know that in the weakness of their lives may lie the deepest strength of their lives, if they have the strength of God. "Father, save me from this hour," he said in his later trial. It stood awful and terrible before him; and he shrank back from it, and it might seem as if he were not going to do the things that he came for. "Father, save me from this hour." And then there rises up the great fulness of his divine consciousness,— "Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." What is man made for, except that he shall meet the suffering of his life in the fulfilment of the purposes of his life? Can it be that I have walked thus far, and shall not be able to complete that for which so much has been done? Then
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the hands are dropped even from petition, and then the one great wish fills his soul: "Father, glorify thy name."

My friends, I cannot help connecting the two. I cannot help thinking of the mountain, and then of the strength that came out of the mountain, and then of the strength that came at the last, and made him ready for the cross. God grant that you may so conquer your temptations by the power of God, that they may not leave you as you were, but fill you with the consciousness of God, with the consciousness of yourself, and with deep sympathy with your brothers, so that, when any great sacred trial shall come to you, his influence and his strength that are in you now may be in you then; and everything shall unfold itself in the great prayer, "Father, glorify thy name."

It was only a few days after that Jesus offered the prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. And then there came up the thought of the object of his life in the world, and the way in which that life had been fulfilled; and Jesus could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me
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to do." Of all the satisfactions that men have, is there anything greater than this? I have made my contribution to the purposes which God had in me; I have fulfilled the purposes of him who sent me into the world. It has been gradually growing clearer and clearer to me. Much I did not know, as I followed back my tasks unto him who gave them to me. Much I cannot understand, I do not know. I only know that I have done my part: "I have glorified thee upon the earth, and finished the work thou gavest me to do." When a great man dies, a man whose life is to make a conspicuous part in the history of the world, or when a man dies whose name is to be forgotten with the dropping of the sods upon his grave, it matters not, if he can say, I have glorified him, the great Master of all the plans and purposes of the world; I have glorified him upon the earth, and finished the work he gave me to do. Then whatever glory we can render to him in any fuller life, whatever work he shall give us to do hereafter, whatever joy we shall be called upon to enter in virtue of the fulfilment of the little work he has given us here, becomes possible;

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possible; and the eyes that close upon good work, humbly finished in the fear of God, open upon the untold tasks and the infinite growths of the eternal life.

From the temptation when the youth's soul struggled in that conflict with the great power that was besieging him on to the time when he gave his life into the hands of his Father, it was but one and the same Christ who was to finish the work which God had sent him to do in the world. God grant that we may echo the same power that worked in Christ in the sphere in which we are sent!

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XI.

IRREMEDIAL LOSS IN SIN.

HEB. xii. 16, 17.

YOU must all remember the story in the Old Testament to which these verses refer. Esau, the wild hunter, has returned from the chase, weary, exhausted, hungry. To satisfy his hunger, he sells to his brother his birthright for a mess of pottage. Afterward, when he wanted to undo the consequences of that rash act, he could not. He found that he had done something that was irreparable; that he had set in motion consequences which, in spite of all that he could do, would exercise their influence upon his life.

This simple story calls our attention to the irremediable element in all sin. There is loss, irreparable loss, of manhood in every wrong act that we do, in every wrong thought we cherish, in every inward dishonesty and disloyalty. There
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is something that repentance cannot do. It cannot undo the past; it cannot blot out our record, it cannot change it in the least. If a young man has squandered the fortune left him, he may regret it in after life; and that regret may be in itself and in no other respects a very good thing, but it cannot recover his lost fortune. He may have gone into athletics beyond his power of endurance, he may have broken his constitution and lost his health, persisting against warning after warning from his overtaxed body. In after life, he may regret it very much; but his sorrow will not redeem his lost physical vigor. Or he may go through the four precious years of his college life without securing the disciplined mind and wide information which these may furnish; and when he is in the stress and strain of public life, fighting in the broad arena of business or in some profession, he may be very sorry that he did not use his advantages in college. But, again, the sorrow, however much good it may do in some respects, cannot bring back that lost opportunity, cannot restore to him what he has thrown away.

So

So it is in higher things. We read that Paul persecuted the Christians with blind zeal. We read afterward that he repented of it; but his repentance could never change the fact that he had persecuted the lowly followers of Jesus, that he had identified God's service with inhuman practices, that he had wasted his power in early manhood. That record was unchanged to his dying day. We read of the publican, Zaccheus, who afterward repented in Christ's presence of his unjust exactions, and his life as an extortioner. His repentance wrought out great results for him; but it never changed his record as an extortioner,—that he always had to face. The years that he had squandered in his unjust practices were forever without redemption for him. And so there was one thing which the penitence of the penitent thief could not do for him. It could not recover for him his lost life on earth, it could not make him out other than a thief.

There is, therefore, this irremediable element in all sin. There is an irreparable loss to us. All our dishonesties, all our disloyalties, all our impurities of thought,
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all our insincerities,—all that is bad within and baleful without grows into a fixed and unalterable record, and goes on for a long time wielding its baleful power over the agents that set it in motion, and over the agents that are associated with it in the corporate life of society. It is a terrible thing, but it is our wisdom to face the fact as it is. There is something that repentance cannot do. There is something that it could not do for Paul or Zaccheus or the penitent thief. There is something that it cannot do for you or me: it cannot alter our disloyal record, our past as sinful men.

Now, then, what can it do? It seems to me that a man who has opened his eyes to this fact has come face to face with the reality of things, and this very fact may set in motion in his heart the emancipating power of God. If he sees that the past of sin is permanent as a record, that it goes on for a long time exercising its influence upon him, he will come to a better sense of the sinfulness of the act and of his own folly in identifying his good with any such action; and this sense of his terrible act and of his folly in doing it
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will generate a repugnance to it which is the very power of God in emancipating the soul from its record and its habit. When Esau came to look upon his rash act, when he thought that he could not undo it by turning his past over and shedding a few tears in his father's presence, then the result of his impetuosity became more serious, and led him to think more deeply of all such acts, which, though inadvertently done, are fixed, and send their influence over the whole of a man's life in this world. Would he not also feel more and more his own folly in identifying the good of his rational spirit with the satisfaction of appetite? And would not this sentiment, the very fact that the past was persistent, that it had rained down its judgment upon him,— would not that fact generate a new power of self-protection, vigilance, and freedom?

Much more with Paul. We know that the recoil of his soul from the past, the recoil of his soul from his guilt and folly, was the power of God that developed in his heart all his zeal and effectiveness as an apostle of Christ. We know that it was this same recoil from a fixed, abhorrent

rent past which made Zaccheus say, "The half of my goods I give to the poor ; and, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore it fourfold." He allowed his whole past to excite in him a proper thought and a proper emotion, and these brought into his heart the delivering power of God.

So with the penitent thief. That marvellously tender and trustful appeal of his to Christ, just as they were both going down into the darkness of death, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,"—this appeal was excited in the poor man's soul by the view of his past life as a fixed and shameful record, and by the sense of his own folly in having identified his good with such a course of life. Peter went out from the presence of the Lord, and wept bitterly ; but his tears could not wash out his denial. That remains fixed as a part of Christian history for all time. But the recoil of Peter's soul from the base act he had done, his sense of grief and folly in having taken that for his good,—that sent him on. He attained new freedom,—the freedom of a son of God.

Carry

Carry a tame pigeon a hundred miles, and set it free, and its instinct of strangeness, its instinct for home, its fear and its love, are the double impulse in its wings to send it home. When the boy in the parable of our Lord found himself in a strange country, the feeling of strangeness and the feeling of home, the instinct of fear and the instinct of love,—these were the wings that carried him out of the far country to his old home.

And so it is with us. If we face our bad acts and our bad deeds as permanent things,—things that no tears can wash out, no repentance can undo, nothing can change from what they are,—there will be a recoil in us from that past, there will be a sense of guilt in us, and a sense of folly in us, for having identified the eternal good of the human spirit with such gratifications. And the recoil will be the power of the Eternal Spirit delivering us from our past and from our habit into the future which God has willed for us, and into the habit that Christ wears, and which we may share.

XII.

“MY FATHER’S BUSINESS.”

LUKE ii.

THIS was the first visit of this child to Jerusalem since he was carried there in his infancy. When the company that had brought him now to this city and temple of his delight, and his parents had turned toward their home, he lingered behind, as we have read; and when they found him, in the temple where they looked for him, he turned to them his surprised and grieved face, and asked: “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house, that I must be about my Father’s business?” Twelve years old! But he knew that God was his Father, which scarcely another man in Jerusalem knew. He knew that the temple was his Father’s house. He knew that all that was before him in his dawning life was simply his Father’s business.

business. What a wonderful beginning for a life as wonderful! And, when we find him in the midst of it, he is uttering the same thought: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." And at the close: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." From the beginning to the end, it was "my Father's business."

But, with this devotion to his heavenly Father's will, there was the most perfect fidelity to his human duties. We read that he went back to Nazareth with his parents, and was subject to them as aforetime. If traditions are to be trusted, he went into the shop of his father, and worked at his humble, useful occupation. And we may well believe that no work which was not perfect went from that carpenter's shop.

When he went out into the world, helping, inspiring, strengthening, relieving every one, and being always a shepherd, and, like a good shepherd, giving at last his life for the sheep, he was still teaching that God is our Father, that the solitary thing which any man has to do in this wide world is his Father's business.

Have

Have we not to learn the same lesson? We stand in this double relationship,—first to God over us, and then to the world that is about us. But we are to hold these two together in one thought and one intention. If we take the first by itself, our thought becomes a meditation, an emotion. We become monks; we build monasteries; we tread cloisters. If we take the other, life becomes narrow, restricted, one-sided, of the earth, earthy. There is no help but binding together and never separating the two which God in wisdom and grace has united.

If now we remember our Lord's precepts, we find the same lesson, that the second commandment is like the first. But the first is the first, and the first is the greatest. The world must have both. If we take the second alone, life goes down, and is restricted because it is not living up to the greatest. If we look down, then our shoulders stoop. If our thoughts look down, our character bends. It is only when we hold our heads up that the body becomes erect. It is only when our thoughts go up that our life becomes erect.

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We have another successful, forcible illustration of this in a man whose life has impressed men more deeply, perhaps, than any other which has been lived since his time,—Saint Paul. We think of him, as we do of Jesus Christ, as doing his Father's will. Paul was a tent-maker. If he had given himself up to tent-making alone, he might have been a skilled and successful and wealthy tent-maker. But then his character would have taken something of the shape and texture of the tent. A man's occupation does enter into a man's life, as truly as a man's life enters into his occupation. But when he gave himself to this higher purpose, then this common work, this tent-making, became illustrious, sacred. It wrought in everything he did. I suppose there is no one who knows the life of Saint Paul who does not believe that the trademark with his name upon a piece of black tent-cloth in the market of Corinth was a positive addition to its value. And I am sure he was a better preacher for this work. As he himself said again and again: "These hands have ministered unto my necessities." "I have wrought with labor, . . . that we might not be chargeable

chargeable to any of you." He asked no favors from any one. He cared for himself, and took care of those with him. In this independence, he did the work of his ministry. When he was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, because he was of the same craft he abode with them, making this tent-cloth, in order that he might preach. He could say that he preached because he made the tent-cloth, the two working together, but the preaching being first. It is what ranks in our thoughts as first that determines the character which we possess. We may do good things and inferior things, but the things which are first in our purpose determine our character and our desert. Some one said to Casanova, "Rubens, I believe, was an ambassador who amused himself with painting." "No, madam," was the reply, "Rubens was a painter who amused himself with embassies." The first would have left him an ambassador long ago forgotten. The second leaves him an artist evermore remembered.

What, then, does it come to? What are we to do?

First of all, are we not every morning
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to adjust ourselves to God? Are we not to take that simple principle which is as true in morals and conduct as in material things,—that the greater includes the less? The greater does not disown it: it holds it. The less does not supplant the greater: it rests within it. It is when we carry out this principle in the strength and unity of our conduct that we have taken a very safe principle by which to live. Every morning, before we cross our threshold, before we make a single plan or appointment for the day, we must give ourselves unto our Father's business. In looking out upon life, in choosing our profession, before we take counsel and as we take counsel, first of all we must ask why we live at all, then give ourselves to our Father's business.

We are not, as we do sometimes, to determine what we will do, and then devote it to God; but we are first to devote ourselves to God, and then ask him what we shall do. Give life to him in the large, and let him arrange the details afterward. The ship first adjusts herself to the sun in the heavens; and, having done that, the ship is rightly adjusted to every star
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that gleams. The man whose heart is right with God is wrong with nothing. The man whose life contents God has fulfilled its intent. The life that does the will of God does everything that men ought to ask and everything that men require.

What shall we find, then, in a life like that, beginning first of all with God, as at twelve years of age we are standing in the temple, with the thought of him uppermost in our minds? Standing in our morning, in our youth, looking down upon life, what shall we find? We shall find, in a life like that, everything that we need, every power recognized, every faculty of our being energized to do its best. There is nothing beyond it. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like; namely, this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That is what God requires, and whosoever shall do that shall do all which he needs to do to be all which it is possible for him to be.

We shall find, again, everything that
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the world needs at our hands. No one is so compassionate toward men as God. The Father is tender and pitiful to his children. There is no one overlooked. There is no prayer unnoticed. The whole thought of God is pity and mercy and helpfulness and love toward all men. And when a man is doing the will of God, is about his Father's business, he is expressing the love of God and carrying it down among men.

The world has many wants. It wants tents, it wants goods that come from the carpenter's shop; but shall we be satisfied, then, to be only tent-makers, carpenters, scholars? The world needs apostles. A man may be a better apostle for being able to make a tent: he will only be a good tent-maker when he is an apostle.

We shall find, then, an incentive, an inspiration, the very nobility of our career, when we are working with God and feeling the strength of that divine life breathe itself into our purposes and flow along the channels of our life. There is nothing like it,—nothing like this constant sense that we are one with God, in communion
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with him, listening to him, obeying him, and going out to do his will, sure that there is no man who is faithful to his Father's business but shall know the doctrine and shall do the work.

Thus, also, we shall find the unalterable purpose of God. The thoughts of God are eternal thoughts. They are independent of time, independent of worlds. You set your life to-day into the doing of the will of God. After you have set your life into that life, it need never be changed. A million years hence, what is my duty to-day will be my duty still. The centuries that are before us will never change the character of our duty. No age can ever bring anything of loss to that man who is doing the will of our Father who is in heaven. Let changes come; let the carpenter's shop fall; let men cease to need tents; let our hands lose their cunning to make them; let death come,—we pass on, still thinking God's thoughts, still doing God's business, on, on forever, up the ages. This is to make up our purposes, our intentions, our conduct, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

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“The world passeth away,”—so an old man wrote,—“the world passeth away: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

XIII.

JESUS IN EPHRAIM.

JOHN xi. 45.

THERE is something very noteworthy in this simple incident, thus slightly described in a single Gospel: "He departed into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim." For consider when it was that this apparently unimportant event occurred. It was but a week or two before the last events of the life of Jesus. It was after the time when, as Jesus said, "he had steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." It was, indeed, probably on this very day, the Thursday before what we call Palm Sunday, that Jesus came forth from this retirement in Ephraim, and joined the pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. He knew what was to follow. There was no illusion about that journey. "Behold," he said to his disciples, "we go up to Jerusalem ;

rusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered and mocked and scourged, and put to death." Thus he was looking on through the Sunday of welcome and enthusiasm, when the multitude would spread their garments in his triumphant way, through the week of quick reaction from enthusiasm to hostility, through the betrayal and the garden and the trial to the swiftly approaching cross. Just then it was, when this consciousness of a tremendous crisis was solemnizing every step, that he left his preaching and working, left the cities and the contest with scribes and Pharisees, and went away with a few of his friends into this remote place called Ephraim, and there remained so quietly that his withdrawal has been hardly remembered by the Christian Church, until at last, as he would have said, "his hour was come"; and on precisely this day of this very week he comes back into the world again.

What does this mean,—this turning away from practical work, just when practical opportunity seemed most pressing and brief? Certainly, this inaction at such a time is most extraordinary. Does it
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it mean that Jesus was indifferent to his work, and did not much care whether he finished it or not? We cannot be so foolish as to say that of him. Or does it mean that he was afraid of what was coming, and for the moment fled from his fate? We have yet to find in the later story anything that looks like fear. On the contrary, we have for the most part a state of mind more like that of a kingly triumph, as though he, rather than Herod, were master and judge, and as though the crown of thorns were a crown of laurels. No! It was a much deeper impulse than indifference or fear which led Jesus thus into this withdrawal. The fact was that it seemed to him the best way to use his time. If he was to fulfil his mission in the calmness and self-possession of its last tremendous incidents, it must be, he knew, through strength not suddenly developed as the crisis met him, but stored up for the crisis in antecedent hours of quiet communion with his God. If he was to pour himself out so wholly in word and life, it must be from a fulness not to be received except in this occasional withdrawal into the close and quiet sense of companionship with God.

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This seems to be a law in the life of Jesus. Before each crisis of his life, he goes away from the work which seems to demand him, to the wilderness, or the sea-side, or the mountain, or the garden. It was as though his perpetual and controversial relations with men left him solitary and parched, like a shore left by the receding tide, and as though he must place himself where the inflooding and uninterrupted tide of the spirit of his God could flow in upon him without hindrance, and fill his life again. In his work, he was alone, though he seemed to be in the midst of companionship,—alone in that profoundest solitude, when one is misinterpreted and unheard; and in these times of withdrawal he found companionship, though he seemed to be alone. At the one time, he spent himself. At the other, he revived himself. Thus it was that, with those only who were nearest to him, he went apart into this solitary place called Ephraim; and thus it was that, when he came forth from this withdrawal of whose incidents we know not a word, he comes forth with an absolute self-possession and tranquillity, the
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real crisis of his life lying behind him in this hidden experience, and the triumph of Palm Sunday, along with the tragedies which succeeded it, only the incidents of a willingly accepted destiny.

Let us notice, first, the marvellous self-control which all this implies. To pause just when action seems expected, to be wise as well as to be self-sacrificing, to be able to wait until one's time is come,—that is the hardest thing for the man of a strenuous purpose to do. The reformer is, by his very calling, impatient of delay. The man who has found a truth feels the very power of truth urging him to immediate results. "Now," he says, "is the appointed time. Now is the day of salvation." What disturbs him most is delay. "The trouble is," said one such great reformer, "that God is not in a hurry, and I am." Think, then, on the other hand, of the power in Jesus to wait, to let his purpose ripen, nurtured from years of childhood, like a plant withholding its blossom until at last it blooms once and dies, pausing in the midst of work, if work can be made better by a pause. Let us stand rebuked for our restlessness and impatience,

tience, our hurry for success, our preference for incomplete results, if only they shall be quick results. In the midst of our competitions and controversies and hopes and fears, who of us permits himself any time spared from his activities to go apart into any quiet Ephraim, and permit his life to proceed under a self-controlled and far-reaching plan?

But there is more than this for us to notice. There is that which I have called a law in the life of Jesus, and which thus seemed to demand these alternations of society and solitude, of reflection and action, of receptivity and utterance, as the method of his work. What is the teaching of this law which thus led Jesus away from what seemed his duty to the quietness of Ephraim? A life, it says to us, lived in the absorbing occupations of the active world cannot be lived wisely, unless at times it is led to pause, and let the whole large intent of life lie broadly before it in one quiet view. We are like artists absorbed in working out some small detail of our task. We must at times stand off from it, and look at it in its wholeness; and it is only when
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we thus see each part in its relation to the whole that we see the parts themselves aright. It is not only that we thus need rest in life: it is thus that we get power and insight for life. We try to sum up the great moments of our experience, and we seem to see them in some conspicuous incident of triumph or success. But, in reality, that which gave such incidents their worth or greatness to us, the capacity to meet and use them, was not the immediate gift of the emergency, but was the outcome of a habit of mind or of life nurtured and disciplined in days so uneventful that they have no history. It is in the quietness of Ephraim that the force is stored up which uses the days that are to follow.

Let a man, for instance, who is a student, permit himself no pause in his eager acquisitions, and he becomes only a pedant, a bookworm; not a channel of living truth, but a cistern of stagnant truth; but let him welcome in himself moments of quiet receptivity, when he cannot reckon himself as acquiring anything, but is permitting his larger purposes to flow in upon his mind, and in these contemplative

tive experiences he finds that the great creative movements of his work have had their remote and secret source. Or let a man hurry on in the rush of his business or his society or his home, with no time to think whither he is hurrying, and, when the test of his strength arrives, he meets it only with exhaustion and despair. He is like a man who has been living on the edge of his physical health. He is well until he is tested by some sudden strain, and then he is smitten down. What sadder sight have we to see than this kind of moral breakdown in a man who had seemed to himself strong, but who has none of what young men call "staying power"? He is like a man who thinks himself ready for a race, but finds himself only half-trained for it; and, when the test comes, he knows that no conceivable effort at the crisis can atone for the neglected opportunities of quiet discipline. And what, on the other hand, is more beautiful than this,—to see a man meet the tests of life, and meet them with an abundant strength, not as though he were surprised by them, but as though, through the unobserved discipline of habitual life,
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he was ready for them? Such a man is like an athlete to whom supreme exertion is not a distress and torture, but a joy and glory, because it is the expression of all that quiet training which had it in view. Nay, rather such a man comes forth as Jesus came from Ephraim, with the struggle and darkness left behind him, and the step of a conqueror along the way that is left to tread.

I have spoken thus of these moments of withdrawal, because it is for just such moments that such services as this seem to stand. As we look back upon them, at their close for this year, what is it that they seem to mean? They are not meetings for discussion or argument or for the demonstration of religious truth. We come here simply because the pressure and strain of life are constant, because its cares and perplexities are baffling, because its follies and trivial events are absorbing, and because we want to place ourselves for some brief instants where the whole meaning and tendency of life may lie broadly and quietly before our view. But let us not think lightly of such times of meditation and communion. It may be that

that the very issues of life are determined for you while you thus sit and let God speak to your soul. I do not know — nor do you — the duties, opportunities, emergencies, to which you will soon be called : whether the multitude will throw their garments in your way, as you move on in some noble triumph, or whether that same multitude will scoff at you, as you bear the burden of your cross, or whether both these things will happen to you. But this I do know : that, when the crises of life thus meet you, as they met your Master, you will bear them, not in a quick accession of spiritual strength, but in the power brought down into your life through some such moments as are permitted to you here of quiet receptivity before the spirit of your God, so that, while the world may sum up the great moments of your life in its conspicuous activities, you will silently refer them to the experience of some remote and unrecorded Ephraim.

I remember in Austria a high hill rising out of the plain, with a steep and rugged pathway winding up its flanks, and, at the top, a broad and beautiful view and a shrine for prayer. As one wearily
climbs

climbs the hill, he finds at intervals rough benches set for his rest; and opposite each bench is set up one of those rude pictures from the last days of Jesus, which are called in Catholic countries "the stations of the cross." Thus, one pauses in his climbing; and, as he pauses, there looks down upon him one great thought out of the life of Christ. And so, refreshed, he climbs again; and the landscape slowly broadens beneath him, until at last the world on every side lies at his feet and the final station of the cross is won. Such is the normal and healthy progress of a human life. It must be climbing, and it must be weary. No fool is greater than he who would see the vision from the heights of life without making the effort to climb. Yet here and there along this steep ascent there are given us brief chances to pause and rest,—moments like those which Jesus sought in the quietness of Ephraim, and like these which, in God's mercy, we have been permitted to share together here; and, as we thus pause, there looks down upon us one solemn thought of the Christian life, with its plain and restful message. So, refreshed and

and strengthened, let us climb again, from the lower to the higher levels, from station to station of larger outlook, until at last, in God's own time, we may stand where the world and its temptations are softened into a landscape at our feet and the final station of the cross is won.

XIV.

NICODEMUS.

JOHN iii. 1-9; vii. 45-52; xix. 38-41.

THESE three passages tell us all that we know of this man named Nicodemus. The first of these incidents was on a day near the beginning of the ministry of Jesus; the second occurs more than two years later; the third, some six months later still. It is interesting to notice the character and position of the man who thus stands before us. He is an exceptional type in the Gospels. Most of the early disciples were plain people, fishermen, and country folk. This man, on the contrary, was an educated and cultivated gentleman, a member of that council which gave law to his nation. Translated into our modern life, his place was something like that of a respected lawyer or an honored judge in one of our upper courts. Here we have then — what
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we have hardly anywhere else in the Gospels—the contact of Christianity with a cultivated life; and we see this life unfolding itself before us through its whole religious history. The stages of this contact are marked by the three days of which we have read. This educated man, wanting to know about the message of Christ, turns straight to the Master himself. It was a sincere, candid, scientific thing to do. It shows us an open-minded man. He comes to Jesus by night, and it is commonly thought that he came by night because he was afraid to come by day. I think it was, on the contrary, a mark of his prudence and sagacity. It was not for him to follow Jesus with the noisy, shallow rabble that thronged about the new Teacher through the day. It was for him to seek out some quiet hour of evening meditation, when the Master could be found alone, and when he could calmly investigate what the new leader meant to do. Thus it was that he came by night, as a truly scientific student and critic should have done; and then it was that Jesus poured out upon him that marvellous conversation which we usually associate with the name of Nicodemus.

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“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”; “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit”; “The wind bloweth where it listeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.” All these utterances have a height and depth and range hardly equalled even in the gospel narratives. What Jesus is trying to unfold in this first interview is that which must always be the first word of religion. It is the teaching of the naturalness of the supernatural. Like the birth into one’s physical life,—with the same naturalness, yet with the same mystery and miracle,—like the coming of the wind,—ordered by natural laws, yet by laws beyond our comprehension,—so is the coming of the influence of God upon a human life. It is the same message which in our own day is pressing to be heard, the naturalness of the supernatural. But Nicodemus cannot receive it. He has not come there to hear such a method. He has come there to ask his own questions, to investigate and criticise; and so the critic turns away, puzzled and bewildered. “How can these things be?” That is all he says, and

and for two years we hear of him no more.

What do you suppose happened to this man in those two years? We do not know. We only know that the experience of life must have pressed upon him as upon other men. A few new joys must have come into his life, and a few trials and sorrows must have befallen him; and, as each fresh experience touched him, he must have recalled that wonderful interview which he at the time so little understood. "This is what the stranger meant," he must have said to himself, as he tried to interpret his experience. "Now I begin to see that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the spirit is spirit. More and more I discover that, as he told me, nature is full of mystery; and that the way of Christ, mysterious though it is, is the way of nature." How do we know that Nicodemus thus remembered Jesus? It is because, when we next see him, he has taken a great step. He is no longer standing bewildered before Christ, nor seeking him out like a critic in the dark; but he is openly pleading with his brethren for justice to Jesus. "Doth our law

law judge any man," he asks judicially, "before it hear him and know what he doeth?" Jesus, he has come to believe, should have a fair chance. His message deserves to be heard. It has made its impression on him in spite of his first bewilderment. Then he came as a critic, and went away without any conscious gain. Now he reappears after these years of experience, and the message has plainly grown upon him, so that he takes the step from the position of a critic to the position of an advocate. He is no longer a neutral: he is ready to confess that the word of Christ has meant something to him.

One other step remains for this educated man to take, and it comes naturally and it comes soon. The life of Jesus is hurried to its close. The hopes that lived with it seem buried in his grave. The new faith seems nailed to his cross. It is a time to test the supremest loyalty. Then it is that Nicodemus comes again,—comes not to talk about his faith, but to do something in witness of it, to offer himself for service. Just when the cause seems most hopeless comes this cultivated gentleman,

gentleman, with his offering, bringing his myrrh and aloes,— nay, bringing the offering of himself for the cause which he has slowly learned to love. He comes as a willing, obedient disciple of Jesus Christ.

Such is the story of Nicodemus. So his religious life unfolds itself before us in these three glimpses of his three great days. First, he has tried to find religion by the way of criticism ; and the problems of religion have been opened before him, though he could not enter in. Then he has tried the way of experience, and through the interpreting of his own life he has been led to see that religion has a right to be heard among the factors of the world. Finally, he commits himself to the way of service ; and, in that offering of himself for service, his criticism and his experience find their goal. From neutrality, through justice, into obedience ; from criticism, through experience, into service,—that was the way in which the life of this educated and high-minded man seems to have been led. And such, it seems to me, is the normal course of an intelligent man in his relation to religion. Sometimes, indeed, there comes one great
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tumultuous and passionate shock, which revolutionizes life in an instant, and removes all distinctions of intelligence and ignorance. But the way of Nicodemus remains the type of a normal religious growth. Let an educated man come, first of all, to Jesus with an open and honest mind. In some quiet evening of meditation, let his soul come face to face with the message of religion, and let him hear it in all its naturalness, yet in all its mystery. That is the attitude of criticism, and it is not to be discouraged nor despised. But let a man be nothing but a critic, and he remains nothing but a neutral. He can only turn away with the words of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" What the message of religion must have is time. It must be taken up into the material of experience. A man must try it, as he tries a key to life, and see whether it unlocks things that were hidden. As his joys encourage him or his trials perplex him or his temptations beset him, he must unlock their meaning with such words as these: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit";
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and, passing into the regions opened by such a key, he must consider whether they are not the regions where he wants to dwell, and where his life is interpreted and sustained. And yet another region still waits beyond this interpreting of experience before complete discipleship is reached. It is the world of service. Let a man remain in the world of criticism, and he never realizes the truth of religion at all. Let him remain in the world of experience, and he realizes it only selfishly and partially. But let him, having weighed the matter with an open mind, and having tested it by the experience of life, then bring to it, not the profession of his lips, but the offering of himself for the service of his God; and then the course of a religious experience is complete. It is like the story of many young men, whose names you daily read in yonder transept, where you bare your head as you pass by. They had heard the principles of their country expounded to them here; and they had received them by the way of criticism, and they had done well. Then they had tested their principles by the way of experience, and had

had found that a country of freedom and union was a country where they wanted to live. Then comes the final test, the test of service. Could they offer for their country's sake the myrrh and aloes of their fragrant young lives, just when the principles of their country seem nailed upon a cross? It was that great transition which changed those youths from commonplace young men to whom education had brought no greatness into the heroes and martyrs whom we remember forever.

So it is that the summons of the religious life meets educated men to-day. It asks no abrupt acceptance, no unreasonable emotion. It meets first the critical mind, but asks us to be more than critics; it meets next the experience of life, but asks us to be more than introspective interpreters of our own problems; it summons us finally into the way of unpretentious, honest service, as the way which verifies and sustains the hidden things of faith. What is there more stagnant and sterile than a life which would get everything by the way of criticism? What is there more introspective, self-absorbed,
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and inadequate than the constant interpreting of one's own experience? But what is there more beautiful among the sights of earth than to see a man, with the bloom of his education on him, passing on, through the way of criticism and the way of experience, into the way of service, gathering up the results of his inquiries and the broadening experience of his life, and bringing these gifts, like fragrant spices, as offerings to the Higher Life? It is as if you should be standing at first outside some great cathedral, and studying its towers and porches and criticising its spires. It is the student's mind investigating the master's art. Yet slowly your feet are leading you from without to within; and, as you enter, you pass from the attitude of a critic to the attitude of a worshipper. Your experience spreads itself out before you as you enter, and you are lifted by the lifting arches and broadened by the broadening aisles. Thus you move slowly on, up the long aisle of this temple of a Christian experience, until at last you lay the little gift you have—even your own unpretending, sincere, modest, consecrated manhood itself—upon the altar.

XV.

A LIFE PURPOSE.

I COR. ix.

I SUPPOSE there was never a man who rejoiced more in liberty than this man whose words we have been reading. "Am I not free?" he asks. When he was a prisoner, and the chief captain said, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," he answered, "But I was free born." So, when these people at Corinth were questioning him and sitting in judgment upon his conduct, he answered: "Am I not free? Can I not do as I please? Have I not this right given me, that I should carry on my own ministry according to my own judgment?"

The case was this: They were disputing whether it was right to eat meat that was offered to idols. Some said they might, others said they might not. Paul said it was perfectly right to eat it; that putting
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the meat before an idol did not affect it in any way. Having demonstrated his perfect right to eat it, he said: "I shall let it alone. I have a right to do it; but I renounce the privilege, and I do that which is less desirable in your eyes." He did this, not from any spirit of mere amiability or good nature. He did it not at all in the spirit of a time-server. But he did it because, in using his freedom in this way, he could accomplish the greater purpose which was engaging his mind. He had set himself to win these Corinthians to the faith of Christ; and nothing which would hinder that should enter into his life, nothing which would help that should be left out of his thought and work. Bending everything to this one purpose, these little questions about eating meat which had been offered to idols, about his salary, about a wife,—all these things settled themselves in the train of that great purpose which was the passion and the commandment of his life.

We answer that question always with the same reply,—Am I not free? We continually assert it. We assert it for ourselves, and when we judge one another.

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Yet often, because the assertion of our liberty has met with resistance, we abandon our purpose and turn away from our plan, as if some force were arrayed against us which we could not overcome. Take this question of eating meat offered to idols, one which does not come in a literal form to any of us. Some night, alone under the stars, we debate this matter with ourselves, and determine that we will not partake of the meat. We go to our rest, complacent in our good resolution. But, in the morning, habit asserts itself. The customs of our neighbors appeal to us. We have a craving, a hungering for the meat, as if nothing else was desirable; and it seems better than ever. The chances are that, before the sun passes over our heads, we shall be eating meat offered to idols. Have we not had that experience? We feel that resolutions and purposes go for so little; and we satirize them in our philosophies and in our poetry, as if good intentions were like the early dew and the morning cloud. Yet liberty is a very real thing. We have done in this instance precisely as we pleased. We chose to give up what we had enjoyed,
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then we chose to take it back. That was liberty. Surrender is a desperate sort of freedom. The man who is keeping a beleaguered city at last opens the gate and lets the enemy in. He opens the gate in perfect freedom, but he has to do it. So, when we give up our resolution, we are perfectly free, but we have to give it up; and the power is none the less tyrannical because it is in us, and because it comes to us in the guise of freedom.

Is there anything which will hold us to the purposes which we deliberately and carefully form? You answer that we must be firm. That is simply substituting one word for another. Is there any way by which we can be firm? We can be firm by laying hold upon something which is firm. If I can grasp something which cannot be moved, there is a chance that I shall not be moved. Is there anything better than that which Paul adopted? He gave his thought and life to one supreme and constant purpose. Whatever happens, whatever I gain or lose, I will win these Corinthians. When he had settled that, all other things adjusted themselves to it. We need more than resolutions. I think

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we need to put our thought in the singular number ; to have not intentions, but intention ; not purposes, but purpose ; not choices, but choice ; some one thing that is great enough to hold us. When we get this, then we get strength, marvellous comfort, and achieve a wonderful saving of time. It is unworthy of us, it is inexpedient and unprofitable, to be so often discussing little questions of conduct, little matters of casuistry. Cannot we settle these in some grand principle, so that they shall adjust themselves to our life as the waves adjust themselves to the ship which is sailing through them. Sometimes we meet these questions as if they were a swarm of gnats, fighting them one by one ; when, if we would only move on, we should leave them behind, and then in the cool, clear air we could do the work which we have determined to do.

I think you will find it difficult to recall any man who has done much in life who has not done this. You do not find the world's great men sitting down to consider these little things. They establish themselves in one great purpose : then everything settles itself with relation to that.

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When you know where the north star is, you know where every star is that shines. When you adjust yourselves to that, you are adjusting yourselves to all the stars which are around it. When the soldier determines to give himself to his country, he must needs give up home and comfort, and a thousand other things. When a student determines to be a scholar, he determines to give up everything which would hinder his purpose, to take on whatever would help it. One of our professors told recently of a merchant who was devoted to very high purposes in life, who was determined to be a man. One day a ship that was coming home was delayed. He became anxious, and the next day more troubled, and the next still more. Then he came to himself, and said, "Is it possible that I am coming to love money for itself, and not for its nobler uses?" And, taking the value of the ship and cargo, he gave it to charities which he esteemed, not because he wished to get rid of the money, but because this was essential to the great thing which he had determined to do. Then there is the life, so interesting and stimulating, of
Hannington,

Hannington, the bishop and martyr ; a man who turned aside from the allurements of the life to which he was born, dropping one thing after another, that he might be a better priest in his parish ; selling his horse, because money would serve his purpose better ; changing his carriage house into a chapel, because his purpose needed the chapel ; leaving England and venturing into the heart of Africa, because there he could better do the work to which he had devoted himself. Is there anything which will hold a man against all weakness and all temptation so well as this covenant which he has made with his own heart,—This one thing I will do ; and this, not less, not other, shall be my success ?

Then there comes one other question,—What is it to which a man has a right thus to devote himself ? It must be something which is so high that it is right to leave everything else to secure it, a purpose so high that nothing else shall enforce its claim in the presence of it. Here, in this house, in this service, over this book, there is but one thing which a man can say, there is but one choice so high that every
other

other choice ought to submit to it. There is one purpose so grand that every other ought to give way before it. That is, to live for Him who is the truth, the life, the Son of God and the Saviour of men. When we devote ourselves to him, questions of casuistry are answered. Whether you eat meat offered to an idol depends on whether eating it or letting it alone will better serve your purpose to be his disciple and apostle. Whether you take this course or that depends upon its relation to the greater thing. You are taken out of the little things that centre in self. Questions of ease, questions of self-indulgence, questions of gain,—they are all behind us. When we have settled with ourselves and with our God that we will do the things which are pleasing in his sight, then comes the truth that, if a man wills to do the will of my Father, he shall know; if a man keeps my commandments, Jesus said, God will live with him, and I will live with him; if a man follow me, I will give unto him eternal life. In the presence of these spiritual truths, what are these little questions of meat and drink, of pleasure and ease,—the trifling themes

themes of popular casuistry? They fall into their proper insignificance; and we press our way forward along a triumphant career, honorable in its course, and faithful to that crown which awaits all true and constant service. And, when the Son of God goes forth to war, we follow in his train.

XVI.

MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.

REV. xxi.

IT seems as if words of such gorgeous and vague imagery as these were the very words we need as we pass from one period into another, and especially as we stand at the beginning of one of these periods, which, however arbitrary they may be, still by their associations represent all the relationship of the past to the future. We stand just where we need to read these words which paint this future in all its gorgeousness. There are some words in this Book of Revelation, and especially in this richest of all its chapters, which seem to me to come to us with a certain definiteness and distinctness. There is one verse that I should like to read as the old year passes into the new, sitting quietly with the book open and letting the thought of its words pass into my soul.

soul. The transition from state to state is inevitably dreary, unless there be some principle which underlies it. But it seems to me that, if we could take one of these verses and read it as the old year was passing into the new year, we should get here just the distinctness and the solidity which the idea of transitoriness needs. It is that verse which says, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." The changing of the past into the future is so dreary that men shrink from it. They strive to cling to the past that is inevitably slipping from their hands, because the future is so vague and unreal to them. But, if there be one the richness of whose life makes the past and the future one, if there be one who in the very fact of change can say, not "all things become new," but "I make all things new," the constructive power of the past being fulfilled in the future, then how gracious it becomes! Then the soul that looks for God and his manifestation expects the larger manifestations that are to be given to it in the days that are to come. We are going to realize when we look back upon this period

period of our life, this century in which we live, how the thought of God, the moving principle, and his entire relation to the things that are moving, has taken possession of the world. Men talked of God a century ago, and it was as if they talked of an artificer, a carpenter, a builder, who stood somewhere out of his world, and then, having made it, sent it forth as if it were a ship upon the ocean, only letting it come back to him as it needed repairs. If there is a great thought that has come to men's minds, it is that God is not outside of his world, but that he is inside. He is perpetually leading it on from instant to instant, so that we are sometimes almost inclined to lose it in him and him in it. Thus we feel that the whole conception of God and his relation to the world to-day shows the rich meaning of those words that have come down to us through the ages, "Behold I, this living power, this living principle, I make all things new."

It seems to me that one of the ways in which this word of God is perpetually being verified, and is perpetually becoming a blessed consciousness to us, is in
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the way we are constantly assured that the newness of the world must be in the newness of its human creatures. It is not that the world changes: it is that man changes. The world might not be the same; but, if men were the same, it would still be a monotony. All things must be forever new to every man. Think how they are new to every man who comes into the world. The world deals out its systems of philosophy, it accumulates its rich store of experience; and then every new child that is born into the world has to begin again, as if he were the first one. Sorrow, joy, friendship, enmity, all these experiences of men's souls, we learn about when we are children. We cannot *know* them till they come to us. They are born anew to every new man. Columbus sails across the ocean, and finds America; and it seems as if he had found it for all voyagers since. Yet every new ship and every new voyager discovers it again. So the age is born anew for every soul that enters it. Who can tell what the world is for any one of his brethren? I often think that I would like to be one of my fellow-creatures, it matters not who, for
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ten minutes, that I might know what it is for that man. There is something awful in the thought that a man goes through these threescore years and ten, and is always simply himself; that he does not know how the sunshine appears, how the world seems, how the skies bend over the head of any one but himself. We get some glimpses of how the world reports itself to others. What are those miracles of Jesus over which the world disputes except the recognition by the world of its master, who speaks to it? This world is so much more to him than it was to his ancestors, who knew so little of its secret, who had entered so little into its largest confidence, showing more complete obedience to the master of its life when he stands in its midst. If Christ be a manifestation of God, miracle is the very first condition of his life. I look for it the very moment that I know his nature. The world turns its new side, its deeper being, out to him, as it turns a new side to every man who has looked into it, and claimed the mastery over the world in which God has set him as its lord.

So, if the world is made new with every creature,

creature, what is the expectation for the future? Not only that each man is going to be grander and stronger, but that humanity is to be stronger. The whole race moves forward. Not only occasionally, but steadily and solemnly, the whole great life of man moves on. Who can tell what this obedient earth, so richly yielding her resources, so observant of the power and life of man, is going to be to man in the years to come? A new heaven and a new earth must come when a new man comes to claim it. The only way for us to make a new world is to be forever new men. The only way for us to take upon our lips a new song, to count God's mercies new every morning, is to be perpetually new men, to find our lives new with every rising of the sun. Oh, the great depth of that word of the Master, who said to his disciple, "Thou must be born again"! To Nicodemus, who asked for new laws and new arrangements, the Master said, "You must be a new man."

Do you ever dread the tedium of life? Does it ever seem to you that, bright as life is at its entrance, it must by and by become monotonous? As if the ever
rising

rising and setting of the sun, the ever going on of the seasons, the everlasting repetition of those laws and routines which the social and political life of man has beaten out, must become wearisome and dead with their constant reiteration? What is the prospect, unless there is every new day a deeper life for every child of God, a deeper conception of his Father's nature, his Father's influence, and his Father's love? And the great truth is that he who makes men new with every beginning day makes the world new with every beginning day.

Let us pray for a new birth, not as one experience, but as the perpetual experience of our lives; for such nearness to our God that every day he shall give us something more of himself, be something more to us, so that, being ourselves forever new, the whole world may forever have richness and abundance and variety and beauty and interest and joy and education to give us, so long as we live. So may we enter upon a new year with the promise of a new life.

XVII.

MORAL HEROISM.

HEB. xii. 1, 2.

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been exhibiting the power of faith, faith in the living God. He has been citing examples of it in the olden time ; and he has brought forward a great number of witnesses to show that this faith supported men under the greatest trials, and led them to the exhibition of the highest type of moral heroism. Moral heroism in life was the fruit of their faith. Now, he says to those to whom he is writing, you have the same faith ; and your life ought to be equally manly, equally robust, equally heroic. As he is pressing this matter upon them, the figure occurs to him of a race-course ; and he says, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and

and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

There are two branches to his figure, if we look into it: first, the influence of the race itself upon the runner; and then the added influence of the on-lookers. Through these two branches of his figure, we get these two ideas: first, the influence of a man's own faith; and then the added influence of that same faith held by the world at large encompassing him, really present to his thought and imagination. Let me dwell for a moment on each of these branches of the figure.

First, of the influence of the race upon the runner. Discipline is inseparable from the idea of a race. Every true athlete has a trainer, who prescribes for him what he shall eat and what he shall drink and the form of his exercise. For the time being, the athlete has no will. He is in the attitude of self-surrender to one who guides him, an instructor who is wiser than he. He recognizes the necessity of cheerful submission, of hearty self-surrender, that the discipline may do its best work for him. He never thinks of grumbling at the
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the prescription, at the self-surrender. The idea of the race carries this with it. So the writer tells us a man who holds faith in the living God carries with that the idea of discipline. He has a heavenly educator, a heavenly trainer to whom he submits his will, giving himself up in hearty surrender, that his soul may be wrought into athletic form. And all this through the whole system of discipline which is laid upon him by the will of his trainer. It may be temptation, it may be disappointment; in later life, it may be sorrow and bereavement. Whatever it is, it is a system of discipline laid upon the individual life by one outside of and greater than himself; and the very idea of faith implies cheerful, hearty surrender, in order that an athletic condition of soul may be attained. Again, it is inseparable from the idea of the race that the racer rid himself of every encumbrance. A man does not appear on the race-course with overcoat and muffler on: he strips himself to a condition in which he can show the utmost fleetness. And so self-denial is inseparable from Christian faith. There are certain gratifications and certain

tain pleasures, certain forms of excitement, that the Christian man does not expect. They are incompatible with the very idea of faith. We hear a great many sermons preached about amusements. The matter often seems very complicated. It is in reality the simplest thing in the world. If a man has given himself up to the pursuit of the highest, he will never have any trouble about how much or how little he can have of them. What he wants is to make moral victory sure. Everything that would threaten him with moral loss is cast out of account. Everything that menaces victory is bad. Everything that gives more speed, power, endurance, is good. A man who has faith has self-denial. That is implied in his faith.

Once more, when he has been wrought into an athletic condition, and has placed himself on the race-course, stripped for the race, the next thing is exertion. From start to goal, he runs with all his might. So the idea is inseparable from faith of vigorous volition from day to day, persistent, robust, willing, manly assertion of individuality in the face of opposing circumstances.

circumstances. There is discipline working out an athletic condition; self-denial ridding us of encumbrances and besetting sins; and then exertion pressing the whole power of personality into the victorious pursuit of moral good on which we have set our heart, and which we believe to be the supreme end of human life and the rational justification of our existence in this world.

I have hardly time to develop the other part of the figure: just let me allude to it,—the influence of spectators upon athletic contests. We know that the presence of a multitude of people, a promiscuous, indiscriminate mass, throws a stimulus into all such contests. But we know, also, that, if there are in the multitude old, eminent athletes, who can appreciate skill and power and victorious energy, the presence of this small number in a vast crowd is an added stimulus. Then, if there are those in the crowd who would be glad to see the contestants defeated, who are enemies of their success, their presence in the crowd is another stimulus. There is the stimulus of the mass, there is the stimulus of the eminent few,

few, and there is the stimulus of opposition and enmity.

Now, he must be a very pale specimen of humanity, he must have very thin blood in his veins, who does not feel the stimulus that comes to him from the fact that he holds his faith in God with the world, who gets no inspiration from the fact that he holds his Christian belief in common with the ages of enlightened humanity.

“For all thy saints who from their labor rest,
Who thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Allelujah !

“Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their
Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought
fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their Light of light.
Allelujah !”

There is a vast inspiration that comes to every manly man, to every earnest soul, from the very fact that his faith has been held by the wide world.

Then there is a second impulse coming from the service of great men. The
Christian

Christian ages have been adorned by gifts of intellect and gifts of devotion and gifts of beautiful character, and the very fact that one holds the faith that these men held presents an additional motive. Just as a soldier to-day might honor his calling more in remembering that he follows it in common with the hero of Marathon, with Epaminondas, with Leonidas, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Cromwell, Washington, Grant, so we may honor our faith more, and cling to it with greater devotion and give it greater reverence, because it has been adorned by the saintliness and greatness and power of the world's best men. We can lift up our hearts in thankfulness "to Him who made great lights, for his mercy endureth forever."

There is a final stimulus. O my friends, there are men in this community who do not want that you should be full of power, full of usefulness, who would rejoice in your degradation and ruin. The very fact of the presence of this element among those who are spectators of the struggle should stimulate to vigilance, to circumspection, to prayer, to more continual and energetic endeavor, that we may disappoint

point the wretched spirits that would rejoice in our ruin.

There is a kind of inspiration that comes in the spiritual that is not to be had in the natural race. You notice that the writer says "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." He stands at the goal, and his mighty presence is the heavenly and divine stimulus. We are to take our faith with its idea of discipline, with its idea of self-denial, with its idea of self-exertion. We are to take the stimulus that comes from the world at large who hold this faith, and from the eminent men who have graced and adorned it, and from the presence of those who would corrupt and destroy it, if they could. And, in addition to all that, we are to look to our Divine Master, to his divine personality; and in the magnetic power, in the inciting influence, in the stimulating might that comes from him, we are to run the race that is set before us. How did he run his race? He ran it with patience, and he accepted the cross, despising the shame because of the joy that was set before him; and he has taken his place at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He offers
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to us a crown more beautiful than the garlands which the victor's brow received in the contests of old.

Let us set our hearts upon the highest ;
and let us, in the strength of the highest,
press on to the highest.

XVIII.

THE EYE OF GOD.

Ps. xxxii. 8, 9.

WHATEVER relation there may be between us and the inferior animals, we find in them the types of humanity. Three types seem to be referred to here. There are the beasts that are not held in, and perhaps cannot be. There are those which are made serviceable and held in the right way by careful guidance and constraint, like the horse and mule, with bit and bridle. There are those like the dog of noble breed, that looks into his master's eye and takes his direction from that eye, and knows without voice or gesture whither his master would have him go and what his master would have him do. There are corresponding types among men. There are those whom we deem incorrigible. I do not believe that they are so. I do not believe

believe that any human being is incorrigible by the might and love of the Creator, or will be incorrigible when that might and love are incarnated as they ought to be and will be one day in the Church of Christ. There are those who will go right, who will do what they ought to do, by the help of the bit and the bridle. They need the restraint and guidance of rule and law. There are those whom the eye of God guides,—not that they are above law, not that they set aside law, but what the mere legal servants do because they are afraid not to do it, these do because they love to do it.

The eye of God! We believe in God, but not as if he were only in the past or in heaven. He is not in the creeds and catechisms or in the Bible, but here and everywhere, now and always, with you and me. His eye is upon our ways, upon our souls; and we may look into that eye. We know, or may know, on what that eye rests with pleasure, on what it rests with pity, on what it rests with condemnation; and we can, if we will, always do the things that please him, and can make his good pleasure our constant motive, our
rule

rule of duty, our reason for doing and for not doing, and still more, for being and for not being. We can shape ourselves under the eye of God as he would have us. His eye, we know, rests with pleasure on all that rightfully gives us pleasure; on all the bright and happy and festive side of life; on all that refreshes and recreates; on all that can give us new strength for duty, or can bind more closely the bonds of family, kindred or friendship; on all that gives joy to which there can be no counterpoise of regret or sorrow. In everything which makes us happy, let us feel doubly glad if it is under our Father's eye, if we are following the direction of that eye in the pursuit of fit pleasures and enjoyments, and especially in the diffusion of pleasure and enjoyment among those whom he would have us make happy; for he would have us ministers of gladness, joy-givers, even as he himself is the universal joy-giver.

But how does he look on those slight beginnings of moral wrong and evil, on those first timid, tentative steps in the way of transgression,—the beginnings, in which he sees, as we are prone not to see,
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the bitter ending or no ending,—the first steps which, in his eye, are steps down a declivity that will lead to utter ruin? Oh, if we could read the glance of that all-seeing eye on those early turnings aside from purity and soberness and right; if we could feel the infinite pity with which he regards what seem to us but slight misdoings,—we should dread the first steps, the first thoughts, above all, the first heart-movements in the way of wrong and evil. Let us then, whenever there is any such movement of soul or thought, feel the divine pity resting on us,—a pity rising from the assurance of what these things will surely issue in, what they inevitably tend to, and must necessarily produce.

In our social relations, let us take God's view. He, we believe, looks with equal eye on all, has love and kindness and long-suffering for those with whom we are prone to be impatient, looks with tenderness where we are prone to anger and resentment, has unchanging love where we are prone to be influenced by difference of opinion or party feeling or dissension, and to look with jealousy, suspicion,
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and dislike. Would we only endeavor to take God's view of those among whom we dwell, and among whom our daily intercourse lies, how gentle, how patient, how earnest in all good works and kind offices, how averse from everything that could give offence, should we be! How would our social lives be refined, filled with love and mercy, bearing peaceful and blessed fruits!

In fine, as regards the whole way of duty, if we look upon it as something which we are forced to do because we are afraid not to do it, if we look upon virtue as a constraint, and upon conscience as a hard master, we may be kept from evil; but we shall lose all the joy that there is in right-doing. But if in our own consciousness the eye of God directs us in our daily ways, and rests on those paths in which he would have us go, then those are ways of joy,—of ever-increasing joy, of a joy which shall wax fuller and fuller, until it shall have its consummation in his more intimate presence, when we shall see him, as it were, face to face.

The eye of God! We have what may bring that eye very close to us in him
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who bore God's image,—in him in whose humanity we behold all of the divine that can exist in human form. I think that we all know how Christ, if he were on earth, would walk among us, on what his eye would rest with love, with approval, with pity, with condemnation; and we may follow him. And, if we follow him, we are walking with God. If we live as we know he would have us live; if we make his presence as we have it in the sacred record, a real presence to us, and think that he is really walking among us, as he is in spirit and in his undying love,—I am sure that the eye of God in Christ will make and keep us as God would have us. I do wish that all controversy with regard to Christ could be merged in the one thought of his divine humanity, and in the presence of God with us in that humanity. Oh, if we will but follow him, if we will but make him our way and truth and life, we shall know him as we can in no other way. We shall know him as we should not know him, had we the eye of omniscience for what we call his nature and his offices. The only worthy way in which we can know him is by following him, by
looking

looking into his eye, and making that our director in life. Thus to know him is blessedness here on earth : thus to know him is life everlasting. This gives us guidance day by day. This knits our spirit unto his spirit. May God guide us by his eye, and lead us on and up to that home in heaven where that eye shall ever rest on us, as our eyes shall be ever turned to him !

XIX.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

JOHN iv.

GOD is a spirit, man is a spirit. This is the rational basis of religion. It is in practical recognition of this truth that throughout this land and in other lands thousands of devout men and women have this day entered into communion with the Father of their spirit, spirit with spirit, in spirit and truth, supplicating God that he would give his presence and favor to our schools and colleges. This is a witness of how closely our schools are bound up with the hope of the home, of the church, and of all who love their kind and serve their God. Surely here, where the very ground beneath us has been hallowed by the feet, by the knees of the best men the world has seen, where our charter is emblazoned in our windows, where the very air is full of supplication
which

which has never ceased for more than two hundred and fifty years,—here we, who are the sons of our fathers, may well bow before him, and pray that as God was with the fathers so he will be with the children. This is fitting. It is more than fitting. It is possible; and it is partly as an illustration of the truth which our Lord spoke, sitting on the low curb of the well of Samaria, that I bring it to your thoughts at this time. It has its own weight and merit to commend it, but it illustrates in an impressive manner the truth which Jesus taught. For, if a man can draw near enough to God to worship him, he can come near enough for anything. He can enter in the fullest way into relationship with him,—the relationship of a child with the father, out of which we wander, but to which he persistently recalls us. When we shall learn this truth and believe in it, or rather when it shall believe in us, and shall become part of our truth and part of our life, then there shall come that wonderful enlargement of our whole being, that broadening of our horizon, that deepening of our thought, that uplifting of our purpose,

pose, which will make us feel how great and holy a thing it is to live.

Think for a moment. It is possible for us because we are spirit, just as God is spirit, to have intercourse with him, to talk to him, to listen to his voice. Nay, this is more than possible. It is permitted to us, it is required of us, not by precept or commandment alone, but by the instinctive craving of the child for his father's presence and love. In the commonest things of life, in the greatest things of life when the crisis comes to us, at the strategic moments of our life, we can come to him for counsel, for wisdom which is never denied, never grudgingly bestowed, but bountifully given to any one who seeks. We are pushed along beyond all that men can do, and all that men, of themselves, can be, when our spirit is truly in his spirit. There are wise counsellors, kind friends, generous instructors; but

“What are they all in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?”

Think, again, that this spiritual life is ours as it is God's, and ours because
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it is God's, and that it may be continually strengthened, re-enforced, out of the spirit which God is; that our life is but so much of God's life, incarnate within these human limitations. It is so much of the life of God, unbroken between him and us, as a ray of light is unbroken through its ninety millions of miles from the sun above us to the glass by which we shatter it into its separate splendors. We can ascend along this line of life to him as he comes by this line of life to us. If that wonderful thought of our having God's life possesses us, we shall rise to live with him. For think of this again, that it is possible for us to take God's life and, in our measure, to live it here among men, though we cannot do it by ourselves. We can do it each in his separate place and in his separate opportunities, not by standing apart from him, and doing what we wish, but by living in him and doing what he wishes. It is as if he divided the work he would have done in the world, and allotted to each man his portion. There has been one instance of faith in the world, one that towers above all others, when our Lord Jesus Christ committed

committed into the hands of eleven men the work which had brought him into the world, and gave them their commission, to go into all the earth "even so" as he was sent into the world, and to be witnesses to the truth and life of God. The eleven have been multiplied to thousands. Yet it is only when we place our thought in his thought, and set our personal incomplete lives in his life, when we take our part of God's purposes and change it into our conduct and establish it in our purposes, that we do the work which it is given us to do. When we pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," we are not praying for the conversion of the Gentiles so much as for the little kingdom over which we rule, that it may become the kingdom of our God and be governed by his guidance, that his protection may be our safety and his glory our honor. We rise into this high and holy life with the divine spirit, our spirit with his spirit, only as we learn to know this simple, natural, eternal truth: that, as God is spirit, man is spirit, and man can worship God in spirit and in truth.

But why do we divide these things?

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Do we not need to unite our life, and give to it one meaning and intent? Do we not need to bring all our powers into one power and all our plans into one plan? But where shall they be united? Never anywhere, never completely at any time, save as they are united within the thought and desire of God. When a man knows what God will have him do, he knows the extreme possibilities of his being. When a man is doing what God would have him do, he is doing the best which it is possible for him to do. God's purposes are marvellously fitted to our possibilities. When one comes to feel all this, to break with himself and break with the world, not because the world is not kind and good, but because God is the All-wise, the Eternal, the Almighty, then there comes this transformation. No change from the darkness of night into the glory of morning, no change from the barrenness of winter into the life and beauty of spring, is so great as the change of the man's life when, raising his own thought, he has God's thought, when God's spirit breathes through his faculties, expressing itself in his energies, embodied in his purposes. Whatever the
path

path before him be, it is the path that leads upward, beyond the splendid stars.

O brethren, let us say it over and over to ourselves until we fully believe and know it, and, knowing it, live in it,—let us say it over and over till it sinks down into the mind and becomes part of the very tissue of our being. God is a spirit. I am a spirit. I can talk with him. I can hear him, I can live by God's wisdom, I can be strengthened by God's strength. I can glorify God on the earth. I can lift my little system up into his great system, and find my success in his accomplishment, and the honor of my life in that honor which for himself he has fore-ordained. This is to live. Not until we have found this have we found the beginning of life. Not until we have come to this have we come to God. It is so simple, but so grand, real, and divine,—here on the earth, yet reaching to the heaven of heavens! Then shall we make our career, our intentions, our successes, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

XX.

THE SIMPLICITY WHICH IS IN CHRIST.

[On the day of the funeral of Asa Gray.]

IT is but a few hours since many of us were gathered here at the funeral of a great man. He was, beyond dispute, the most widely known of all our scholars,—not alone in the circles of highest learning throughout the world, but in the still larger circle of popular interest and modest studies. It is impossible to turn to any thought this afternoon but one associated with his memory. This is not the time for any analysis of his greatness; but it is a time to pause for a moment in the midst of our varied and absorbing pursuits, and consider what it was that gave this greatness its peculiar charm.

When I try to strike the note of this gracious character, one Bible verse keeps repeating itself in my mind. It is the
appeal

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appeal of Paul to his brethren, that their minds should not be "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." What gave this great man of science an almost unique power over students, fellow-scientists, neighbors, and friends, was the impression of his single-mindedness and his simplicity, a peculiar childlikeness and guilelessness and naturalness of mind,—traits which, in these days of pretentious learning and inflated self-assertion, seem almost inconsistent with greatness. He was a man of the beatitudes and of the childlike temper. No one could come into any relation with this life without this impression of its simplicity. It was the quality that gave lucidity to his literary style, straightforwardness to his scientific controversies, singleness of mind to his pursuit, and humility and reverence to his religion.

And now, we ask ourselves, what is it that, in the growth of learning and reputation, can keep a man in this uncorrupted simplicity? How is it that a man is not ensnared in his own greatness, so as to grow artificial, self-important, and without simplicity? Evidently, if a man is think-
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ing of himself and his career, of his reputation and of his results, and if thus the world of his thought revolves around himself, he cannot have this endowment of simplicity. For the largest thing which concerns him is himself; and the magnitude of that centre of his system must show itself in pretence, affectation, and self-esteem. But that which gives a man simplicity is the discovery of ends and motives infinitely larger than himself,—the sense of unattained truth, mysterious and compelling, and making all the truth thus far attained seem insignificant; the sense of duty, great and overshadowing, which makes the duty thus far done seem slight and insufficient. Once let these great ideals get control of life, and all the sense of self-importance and attainment drops away. It is like a planet, which thought itself great, and found in itself the centre of its orbit, and then became aware of a larger centre round which its smaller life naturally revolved. It is the transition from what we may call the Ptolemaic to what we may call the Copernican view of life,—the discovery of the great ideas and great ends toward which the
single

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single mind was meant to gravitate. Now, that is what makes greatness humble and simple. To live in the presence of great truths, to be dealing with eternal laws, to be led by permanent ideals,—that is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him. It is the discovery of the relative magnitude of things. That which is known or done seems much to those who look at it, but it seems little to him whose eyes are fixed on the completed truth and the perfect system.

So it was with this man who passes from among us to-day. He was reverent and unspoiled, because he lived in the presence of great ends. He had simplicity, because he had no other ends to gain. Simplicity means straightforwardness; and a life is straightforward when it sees a commanding end of life, and moves toward it. If there are many competing ends, then life is complex. If the end of life and work is clear and commanding, then life is made simple. Thus it was with this great teacher. He knew to how great an end he had given himself, and in the presence of that end there was nothing natural

ural for him but humility and simplicity. Three years ago, he said to me that at seventy-five a man came to the happiest time of his life, "because there were so many things of which he could afford to be ignorant." More and more clear, that is to say, the end of his life had grown to him; and it simplified all his living.

Let us take this law of life as it thus speaks to us to-day. It is not only that the chief grace of greatness is its simplicity, but it is that the way of simplicity is by single-minded devotion to great ends. If any man among us, old or young, wants to keep his spirit as a little child, and desires to outgrow all intellectual conceits and academic flippancy and self-sufficiency, there is but one way to do it. It is the way of devotion to truths and duties and aims, in the presence of which you are necessarily humbled in your weakness and ignorance. What makes a man conceited and artificial and self-asserting is that he has not discovered the proportions of things. It is not his knowledge which puffs him up: it is his ignorance. It is not his superiority and maturity of mind: it is the mark of his ignorance and immaturity.

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turity. He has discovered himself, but not that to which he has given himself. He is like a nebula just coming into shape as a planet, but has not yet discovered the system where his orbit is to be found. The great transition of any thoughtful life is when it passes thus from the way of self-culture into the way of service, and finds a centre of truth or of duty to which it may commit itself. Then it is that single-mindedness, seriousness, humility, simplicity, enter into life.

Finally, let us see this same devotion to high ends, which simplified this man's intellectual life, acting with the same clearness in his religion. How beautiful and helpful it was to those who care about religion to have this man for their ally I need not say. No attendant was more devoted to this chapel, no hearer more sympathetic, no adviser more generous. The simplicity of his religion was like the simplicity of his mind. It was the simple discovery of a centre of life larger than his own will, to which he might freely give himself. It was the simplicity "that is in Christ." The natural motion of his soul drew it to that centre of the Christian system.

system. Ah! If religion could but offer itself to us all in this simple, uncomplicated, straightforward way! What is it that you want in the perplexities and distractions of your life, in its temptations and ambitions, its varied hopes and fears? You want to be drawn out of the control of all these diverse passions into the power of the supreme centre which gathers up your life into a system instead of leaving it as a chaos. That centre of life is what God is to the soul; it is what Christ is to the Christian.

“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,”

says the hymn, with scientific accuracy. Just as the worlds of nature are drawn by the sun, so the natural life of man feels the power of spiritual attraction, and hears that word of the Master, “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.”

Such is the simplicity that is in Christ. It discovers its own smallness, because it has discovered that which is great. Its faith makes it humble. The vision of Christ, like the sense of scientific truth, drives away all self-sufficiency and all self-conceit,

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conceit, and leaves the spirit of the little child. When we see this in the life of a great man of science, we see that which gives greatness its completed charm ; but it is no less true a teaching, for every man among us, that, however far from great his life must be, the charm of simplicity comes to all by the way of faith.

It is the greatness of truth which keeps men humble. It is the sense of God that will save you from the sense of self. It is your loyalty to a Christian end of life which will set you free and keep you pure, and finally make you remembered among men as witnesses of the simplicity which is in Christ.

XXI.

FISHERS OF MEN.

MATT. iv. 19, 20.

I HAVE read to you the beginning and the end of this chapter. It seems to me that it is impossible for us to read the two without feeling that they belong together. Christ in the glory of his youth goes up on the mountain, and undergoes that temptation in which he becomes conscious of his powers. The education of Jesus, the gradual development of his self-consciousness, and the opening before him of the purpose of his life are very clearly given in the Gospels. And then we see Christ coming down from the mountain clear and distinct in the purpose before him. He goes to meet men. We can see something of the discontent which comes into his face as he looks upon them, and sees how they use the capabilities and unfolding powers which he has just learned
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are to be consecrated to the highest uses. There must be something of that feeling as he comes to summon Simon and his brother, casting their nets into the sea, and says to them those marvellous words, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Surely, there is something more here than the simple method of summoning these men to come and do the work that Christ was going to give them. We see in the face of Jesus, as he looks upon these young men, not a particle of contempt of their manhood, no conception of their humanity as though it were made for low uses. There is always with Jesus a sense of the mystery of human life, a sense of its powers, of what it is capable of doing. And, when he suggests in these words the analogy between the work which these men had been doing and the work which they were to do, there is a hint of his whole way of looking at human life. Those same powers that they were using on the waters of Galilee were to be used in all the labor which they were to exercise for Christ. He found them fishermen; and the same powers which they were using, the carefulness, the watchfulness,

ness, the hopefulness, which were needed in their ordinary trade, were to go into the higher life which they were to live, and to be exercised there. Is not, then, the suggestion of these words this: that the power which man is using in the lowest uses is the same power which he is to use in the highest? What God summons him to is the full use of himself, the entire consecration, the entire development, and so the perfect activity of the powers which he is already using. There are no new powers needed to complete the work of the world. God gives a man no powers that were not in him before; but he takes those which the man was using for lower purposes, and consecrates them and makes them a capacity of glory and richness and power which he can never begin to guess. If it were not thus, there would be no power in the will of man to call upon him to stand upon his feet and do the full work of a man. If it were not so, there could be no cry of man to God. We do not ask him to make us different from what we have been. We ask him to make us thoroughly ourselves. All this seems to be involved in the words of Jesus.

See

See how it is with the peculiar powers of our lives. Take the power of admiration. We are forever wasting it upon those things which are utterly unworthy, upon those things which are fictitious in their value, which are false in themselves; and, when the man lifts himself up and uses the same power of admiration, only glorified and purified, and gives his honor and praise to the noblest things, then he has fulfilled the divine side of his human life. Look at our power of hatred. We are hating the discomforts of the world, those things that interfere with our pleasure and enjoyment; but the power of hatred is to be concentrated. We are to hate baseness and wickedness, and to let our indignation pour itself out upon those things which are unworthy of human life. Think of the power of imagination, that marvellous power which may go beyond the clouds and enter into the very heaven of heavens; that marvellous power which may go forth into our own future and the future of man, and picture the things which the children of God are to possess; that power which may go back into the past, and restore for us with its historic grasp

grasp an image of the things which man has done and been. Then think of the foul pictures which are brought before our minds; think of the base conceptions we cherish of what it is to succeed in life; think of the pictures of our fellow-men which we bring up before ourselves! Take these various powers, our hatreds, our loves, our praise, our imagination, and give them to Christ, that he may purify them and that these marvellous capacities may become what they ought to be.

So we see that the man who is degraded and undeveloped must become in his highest life that which he declares possible in his lower life. So it is with all the active powers. What are men doing who are committing the divine capacities of genius to base and unholy things, prostituting it to low uses, when these men have the power by which they may become almost divine themselves, and by which they shall reveal the divine to man? What is the painter doing who brutalizes his art and vulgarizes it through his own mean passions? What is the writer doing who is prostituting both thought and language, and making them base, low, and sordid?

What

What is any man doing anywhere, who is using divine powers for devilish ends? Is he not reversing that command of Jesus, when he said, "Come up unto the highest"? What is the difference between the hero and the athlete? The athlete applies these wonderful powers of our bodies to low uses: the hero applies them to the highest. St. Christopher passing before the world, and carrying the Christ-child through the stream, finds his strength becoming greater and firmer and richer by the burden upon his shoulders. There is the fulfilment of the suggestion of Jesus Christ, to claim, behind every capacity, the power for its highest fulfilment.

What is the reason that we do not think of Jesus as possessing this and that special power, that we do not think of him in connection with strength or in connection with genius? It is because behind every power that he had there lay this power of powers, which was the power to invest all his capacities with the completest consecration. The man enters into the fulness of human life, and forgets his special powers in the consecration of all of his powers to his Father, and makes not the doing
of

of this thing or that thing, of which he may be proud or ashamed, the thing which he most desires, but the living of a life whose sum and substance is obedience.

I marvel when I think how simple are the powers by which the great work is done in the world. I marvel when I look round and see the few men here and there using the simplest powers of our human nature,—using their courage, purity, truthfulness, kindness,—and lifting their little bit of the world by their exercise. It seems to me to open the vast prospect of the future: that the world is to be developed, not by the attainment of great effects by individuals, not by striking or singular and starlike natures that are to shine forth and take possession of the world, but by the consecration of the smallest powers everywhere; by the men who are fishing with a little skill, and exercising their power upon poor material, simply taking the finer material with the finer impulses, and doing the best that they can do with the powers that God has given them. This is the encouragement of the weakest among us, while it is the glory of those upon whom God may have bestowed any larger powers.

Are

Are we not like great musicians playing little ditties upon wonderful instruments? Are we not like artisans spending their time and tools upon poor little accomplishments, and holding them up for the admiration of other men only because those other men are not doing anything greater? We need not to have any new faculty put into us, but just purely and simply to give fulfilment to the faculties we have; to make ourselves capable of what God meant when he sent us into the world.

That is the contribution which each one may make to the salvation of the world. There shall never be given to us, in any celestial glory which we may attain, anything that is not implied in us now. The humanity of heaven shall be nothing but the humanity of earth lifted to its full activity, filled with the divinest impulses, made cognizant of its greatest powers, and made ambitious for its completest work. God grant us the beginning of that heaven now!

XXII.

SEEK, AND YE SHALL FIND.

MATT. vii. 7.

THESE two words must never be put asunder,—seek and find. The reason why so many people fail to find anything great, anything worthy, anything satisfactory in life, is because they do not seek. There are gems in the world, but they shine on the bed of rivers and at the bottom of the sea. Those who would possess them must dive for them. There is gold in the world ; but it lies hid at the heart of the earth, and those who would have it must dig for it. Some persons will travel through a clover field a hundred times, and never find one with four leaves. So there are people who go the whole round of experience, who go through all the relationships of life,—sonship, brotherhood, citizenship, friendship, and so on,—never finding anything uncommon,

common, never finding anything unusual, extraordinary, or divine. It is there just as the clover is there; but they do not seek, and so they do not find. You remember that Saul in the cave was so near to David that David cut a piece from his robe, and yet Saul did not know it. On another occasion, Saul was so near to David that David drew his spear and planted it at the king's head, and the king did not know it. So it seems to me men are just thus near to the peril and the possibility of life, just thus near to the degradation that may be avoided, to the dignity that may be won, and are all the while unconscious of it. They read the Lord's word thus: They who do not seek shall find. But thus it is not written. Seek and find are bound together, and must never be separated.

How reasonable it is that such advice should come to us standing on the very threshold of our life! For consider a moment what a complicated thing it is,—body, mind, soul; material, intellectual, spiritual; appetites, desires, reason, affection, conscience, will, and all the numberless relationships of life that grow out of this

heavenly, of the earth, earthy, and turned him into the sneerer at virtue, the unbeliever in goodness, the unhappy and loathsome wretch that he became. We are drawn into the great life in which we live by the power of our instincts, and we do not know ourselves as we may. We are in danger of putting a wrong interpretation on this imperious nature which we possess, and we need to seek in order to find that interpretation which shall give wings to our instincts and set them free.

It is reasonable, also, to take to heart our Lord's words, "Seek, and ye shall find," because he delivers them on the authority of a great moral teacher, the world's teacher, the divine teacher. For consider that every student goes, to a certain extent, on the *ipse dixit* of his teacher. We think, sometimes, that we live in a wholly critical age. It is a great mistake. Every man who is rightfully a teacher exercises a certain degree of authority. The astronomer tells his pupil to turn his glass now to this corner of the universe, now to that. He tells him he shall find this, that, and the other star, tells him about their dimensions and relations, tells him

him to seek and he shall find, holds out a promise for the reward of obedience ; and the pupil does as he is told to do. It is the same in every department of human study, and we never feel the bondage of it. And so our Lord comes to us just as other teachers do, and says, out of the maturity, out of the fulness, out of the divinity of his own spiritual wisdom, out of the wealth of his own consciousness of sonship and brotherhood, "Seek, and ye shall find." It is reasonable that we should act on his command inspired by his promise, as it is reasonable that we should act on the command inspired by the promise of our other teachers.

And, finally, our Lord's words rest for their reasonableness on the great assumption of the passage which I read,—the fatherhood of God. God will not mock our instincts ; God will not mock our aspirations, our essential and crying needs. Human fatherhood will not mock. No father will give a stone for a piece of bread. No human father will give a serpent for a fish. Human fatherhood meets the real need, and does not mock it. And will not the divine fatherhood meet the real

real need? If, indeed, we ask for a stone, supposing that it is bread; if, indeed, we ask for a serpent, supposing that a serpent is fish,—God will not answer that prayer; but, in denying the form of the prayer, he will answer its spirit, and give us, not what we ask, but what we need. And it is this faith that we are made in the image of God, with truth for our birthright, with character for our crown, with a holy soul for our righteous reward,—it is this truth that is the deepest inspiration of all our seeking, of all our devotion, and all our hopes. This seeking must be perpetual.

How sad was that incident reported of the severe weather in the West the other week, when a man dropped down in hopelessness, and died seven feet from his own door! There are many men that come near a great truth, come close to a great moral triumph, come almost to the door of faith and hope and love and spiritual peace and power, and lie down in despair and hopelessness, and sacrifice their manhood, their possibility of joy and usefulness. We must press on. As Bishop Berkeley says, we must dedicate our youth and our age to the pursuit of truth, if we would find it

it in its symmetry, in its beauty, in its grandeur, in all the glory of its essential being.

Do you remember that story about Jacob, when, after he had sinned against his father and against his brother, he fled from his home, and went out into a solitary place and lay down, as he thought, a poor, God-forsaken fugitive? And he had a dream while he slept of a ladder, one end of which was planted on the earth and the other end of which touched the very heavens. And on its rounds came down and passed up messengers from the celestial world; and, when he woke from his dream, he said, fugitive, vile sinner as he was: "Truly, the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." That was the sense of God that overtook one fleeing from him. If you and I flee not from God, but to God, may not similar visions of glory meet us, and a profounder sense of God enclose us? May not the blessed conviction come to us in the broad fields of the world and under the canopy of the sky, as it came to that fugitive, if we flee to God? This
world,

world, in all its activities, in all its relationship, in all its proper ends, in all its legitimate enjoyment, is none other than the house of God ; and this life, properly interpreted, properly pursued, properly regarded, the gate of heaven.

XXIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

LUKE xix.

BOTH of these parables are crowded full of suggestive lessons for life. Our affair with them to-day consists singly in this point, which both of them teach,—the illustration they both give of the interest these people took in their work itself, without apparently looking forward to any reward which they were to receive. They took hold of the work, and did the best they could. What is interesting is that the Saviour recognizes this very curious diversity of human faculties which we recognize in such a place as this, and which is recognized in the world everywhere. No two people having the same talent given them will come out to the same result and in the same way. Each one has a different capacity; each one is going to use it in a different fashion; each

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each one is going to come out with a different result. But observe, that, in both parables, the people who receive the commendation of the Saviour are those who went to work, heartily interested in the work itself, and carrying that work to a successful conclusion, each one in his own way.

This is the point which I want to press this afternoon. I do not wish simply to call your attention to the value of an intellectual interest in the work you have in hand. I would do that, perhaps, in some detail, if it had not been done so much better, only a few weeks ago, by the English Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goschen, in a very striking address to the students of Aberdeen. He took the subject of the intellectual interest which a man must have in his own work, and he showed, for instance, that the great lawyers succeed, not because they receive great fees, but because they are interested in the law ; and, for another instance, that the advances in medical science are made by physicians because of their personal interest in medical science. This address descends so profoundly into the depths of things

things that some of the English journals speak of it as marking an era in education. I could hope that the editors of the *Harvard Monthly*, or of the other college journals, might find themselves able to make copious extracts from it.

I do not want now to speak of this intellectual interest alone, but to ask, How are we going to get a moral interest in our work? And here Mr. Goschen stops. Perhaps he did not think it wise to go into it before his audience; but that is what I may and must speak of here. How are we going to be morally interested in our daily work, and give our whole vital power to the work we have in hand? Certainly, we are not going to be bought into any such interest. Any one knows, who is preparing for an examination, what the difference is between the work he does only because his father wants him to have an A or B, or because he knows that he will be dropped unless he gets up to this point, or, on the other hand, because he is dead in earnest in the work itself; because he is interested in Homer, or because he is interested in the law of growth, and is determined to find
why

why these trees grow as they do. Any one of you knows the difference between work done for love of the subject and work done merely to keep up to such or such a standard, or for any external inducement which can be offered.

Now, what the parable shows us is the way in which a man gets his interest in his subject, so that he carries on his duty as if he were carrying it on by his own original power. All these men do this thing for their loyalty to their chief, because they are his servants. And the Saviour himself, in many instances, has shown us how he so fully did his work. He said to his mother,—in the very first words of his we have,—“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” There is the key to the whole of it. Again, afterward, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” That is the standard of his endeavor. He is at work because he is the Son of God. God has commissioned him. And he is at work because God wants him. Now, let a man go to work in that fashion; let him study his botany or chemistry in that fashion; let him invest his funds in State Street in
that

that fashion ; let him go into a school and teach a boy the Latin grammar in that fashion ; and then he will know what it is to love his work with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. There is a certain purpose which God almighty has for this work. He has not yet finished that purpose. He has advanced it in every century from the beginning. What we call evolution is simply a result of the steady advancement of God's purpose in the world. The world is better now than it was a hundred or a thousand years ago, because God has advanced his purpose in the world. There is not a man of us who would live in the year 1788, or two hundred years ago, if any wizard could put him back there. The world is so much better a world to live in, that every human being, who knows anything about it, would choose this year to live in rather than any year of the past. Well, God has similar purposes for this century, for this very year that is before us. How are those purposes to be carried out ? Why, by people like you and me, by people who are sons and daughters of God, and to whom God has given this direction,— that
we

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we should go about our Father's business, and be sure to fulfil our Father's will. When that dawns upon a man; when he finds that he cannot be alone, but has infinite powers given him for an infinite purpose,—that man is interested in the work in which he is engaged. Such a man was the great chief of science who has just now been called away from us here.* Such men have been all the great leaders that the world has had. They have entered into their work because they were going about their Father's business, and were using the powers he gave them for the purposes which he had in view. The Saviour himself has again and again shown, with that close, keen knowledge of one who knew what was in man, what this power is. It is the point of so many of his parables.

You remember one of those parables in which he describes two women who are working in the very same place, about the very same thing. But they work with such different motive! They were grinding corn for the evening meal of their children. They were grinding it in the simple way which some of you have seen.

You

* Dr. Asa Gray.

You can see it in New Mexico or Texas to-day. The woman sits with a sort of trough before her. There are little ribs across the trough. The corn is put in there, and she rubs a rough long stone up and down over it, working it backward and forward. In this case, there were two women working backward and forward, holding the same stone and pushing and pulling in exactly the same way. One of these women was all the time provoked that she had to do this. She was asking why some one else could not do it, why this man or this boy could not do it. She was not doing it because she wanted to: she was doing it because her children would complain if it were not done. But the other of these women remembered who she was, that she was God's child, and God had given her children, and God had commissioned her to answer the prayer of those children for their daily bread. I suppose that woman said to herself: "The great God in heaven made this corn to grow. The great God in heaven moved the sun in the sky that the corn should ripen. And, when the right moment came, he watered it

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it with his dew and the showers that fell on the ground; and, when it grew and ripened, he sent men to harvest it; and now at last here I am, sent as a fellow-workman with him, to work as steadily as the sun in heaven and the dew that falls, doing their work in his perfect love. God permits me to give this last touch of his love, that my children might be fed." Thus were these two women, doing the same thing. But, as the Saviour says, one of these women was taken up into the very joy of God,—taken to be his companion, and to rest in his arms! The other woman was left,—left to her own sour thoughts and complainings. This is just the contrast that happens every day in this university. It happens every day in the streets of the city. It happens in every workshop. It is the difference between the man who works with the sense that he is a child of God, and is doing his duty, and the man who is filled with the poor thought of his own selfishness and greed.

XXIV.

COMING TO ONE'S SELF.

LUKE xv.

I ASK you to think for a moment of a single point in the pathetic story which we have read together, of the Prodigal and his Father. I do not ask you to follow this young soul into the worst of its evil, or to apply the lessons of his whole career; for it must be only rarely that the more tragic part of his experience can come home to you with any force. Most of the time—let us frankly confess it—you are not conscious of this complete and voluntary estrangement. You have not abandoned yourself to riotous living. When you hear people confessing this absolute vileness and this hostility to God, it comes to many of you with a sense of unreality. Perhaps you would agree that the case of the elder brother was nearer your own, the son who
never

never wholly deserted his home, but who, though he shared its blessings, was never wholly generous or self-forgetful.

I turn, then, to the young prodigal to-day,—not in his devotion to evil, but in his new beginning of the life of good. Evil has had its way with him. He has left his home, he has yielded to his passions, he has drunk the cup of self-indulgence to its dregs ; and then, as the story says, “he comes to himself,”—he wakes, as it were, from what had been so vivid that he had not dreamed it was a dream, and finds that he has been asleep, or, as perhaps is still more strongly meant, he rouses himself from that illusion and insanity of life in which he had been, as we say, “beside himself,” and, coming to himself again, finds what a sane, true life should be.

“He came to himself.” That was the turning-point of this young man's career. It was not himself, then, that had departed from his father's house into the life of sin. His true life, his real self, had remained behind. As the father said of him, “he had been dead, and was alive again ; he had been lost, and was found.”

He

He had thought it was himself which had gone away, but it was not. It was only a mockery of himself. He had thought that he was, as we say, "seeing life"; but he was in reality only seeing death,—the death of his real self. And now, as he sits among the husks, the illusion is withdrawn from his sense of personality. He rediscovers himself. He comes to himself; and, with the emergence of this sense of his own true personality above the currents of the passions which had overwhelmed him, his new life begins. It was like the emergence of the first dry land after the deluge. It gave a spot of firm ground on which the ark of his safety might rest. There was the joy of finding that which had been lost. There was the miracle of that which had been dead coming to life again.

"He came to himself." That is the transition which makes the turning-point of any human career, whether it has passed through all the tragedy of sin or whether it knows nothing of these deeper sorrows. Still, the first, plain, practical, and personal experience which indicates
the

the most momentous transition in any life lies in this discovery of the meaning of personality, which the parable calls coming to one's self.

See how this occurs in the intellectual life. Your mind wanders away into listlessness and sluggishness. It does its tasks, but it does them trivially and unproductively. It thinks, but not of things of which it is worth while to think. Thus it is that many a young man goes on in his education. He acquires that fatal facility of getting enough knowledge to serve his immediate need, and then of shedding it from the mind like water from a roof. The pressure of his tasks is upon him: he learns, he succeeds, and he forgets. Then, some day, he wakes up. Some great thought or great book speaks its word to him, or some trivial conversation conveys its deeper meaning; and the mind comes to itself. Then the tasks of the mind take on a new meaning. All the dulness and commonplaceness of study drop away. The book or thought meets the awakened mind, and it is like the meeting of the two poles of an electric battery. Out of their contact come
forth

forth new light and new heat. It is the doctrine of regeneration applied to the intellectual life. That which was lost is found. That which was dead springs to life again. It is like a slow blossoming plant, lingering through years of sluggishness, and then blooming in a night.

See, still more seriously, how the same thing occurs in the moral conduct of life. Here is your conscience, drifting, listless, and sluggish. It is not that your conscience is bad : it is only that it is asleep. It has not yet waked to a sense of itself. That is the drowsy condition of the worldly, thoughtless life. Then, some day, something happens — something great or something small — which wakes your will. You come to yourself, and say : "What is this that I have been doing? I have been asleep when I should have been awake. I have been asleep like a soldier at his post. Nay, I have been asleep as one who wakes and finds a precipice at his side." Sometimes, this great transition comes in the tremendous shock of some solemn experience. There comes to you, in the midst of your companionship here, some sudden recall to serious

ous things,—a word spoken, an influence accepted, the terrible spectacle brought close to you of a life which had lived near the precipice, and had suddenly gone over it, or there is brought to you one day the word from your home that the life which was most dear to you, and which you would have done anything to make happy, is all at once taken out of your keeping. At such times as these, a man goes back to his room; and his life is in that moment changed, and he says to himself: "What have I been about, in the midst of these daily possibilities of tragedy and sorrow, in this transitory moment of my human opportunity, to let my real self lie undiscovered or unused? Here is my life with its opportunities, my companionships with their responsibilities, my home with its prayers; and all have been carelessly rejected or sluggishly received. I have been drifting, like the lazy crew of a becalmed vessel. Now, of a sudden, there is the whistle of a fresh wind above me, and the sound of breakers in my ears. It is no time for drifting: it is time to leap to the helm!" And so the will takes command of its
drowsy

drowsy faculties. The energies which were lost are in that moment of crisis found. The loyalty which was dead springs to life again ; and the soul, under the prick of pain or sorrow or example, comes to itself again.

Such are some of the ways in which the life of the mind or of the will takes this mighty step. It is not an experience for prodigals alone, but for every mind and will. The first discovery of a mature life is the discovery of itself. The return of the prodigal to his father's house began when he came to himself. But now there is still another question to ask. What is the inward impulse to this new sense of one's real life? Why is it that, when circumstances thus press upon us, they bring us to this new waking of the soul? What made the prodigal come to himself? Was it simply a natural reaction, a spontaneous, self-originated thought? I have no doubt that the prodigal thought so. I suppose he seemed to himself to be all alone in this transition, as though he pulled himself together by strength of will, and said to himself, "I have gone too far, and will return." But in reality
there

there was another influence beyond his own, which was working in him to draw him home. It was the influence of his father, tugging at his will throughout all his wandering and now at last getting control. What was gnawing at the poor boy's heart was in reality homesickness. It was not alone the self-assertion of his own will, it was the reassertion of his father's will, with its new persuasiveness, so that the moment he came to himself he said, "I will arise, and go to my father." What he thought was his own resolution was in reality the wonderful electric message which had passed from his father's heart to his own, and which demanded its reply; and his coming to himself was of itself the work of God in his own soul.

Precisely so it is that we must interpret all these varied experiences of mind and will which we have traced. Yes, they are human resolutions and reactions, but they are, none the less, when more deeply traced, the workings of the influence of God in the souls of men, the homesickness of the child, and the influence of the waiting Father. Whenever any young
life

life comes to itself in the growth of its mind or the renewal of its duty, there, and in no remoter place, is the influence of God. That which is a human thing from one side is a divine leading from the other. That which is intellectual or moral in one aspect is religious in another. It is a twofold process. We work out our own salvation, because God is working in us to will and to do. We come to ourselves, because God calls us. It is like the coming of the flowers in spring. They might think their sudden push above the earth was a work which was all their own. But it is not. It is in reality their response to the increasing sunshine which calls to them. It beckons, and they bloom. They have been dead, and are alive again. They have been lost, and are found.

O my brethren, I would to God that I could make you see how much this means in the conduct of our daily life! Here we are searching for signs of God and evidence of religion in some remote region of science or of Scripture, while all the time the real evidences of a living God are in the intimate experiences of personal life which remain for us all unexplored.

plored. When, in the unfolding of your mind among the happy influences which beset you here, there shall come to you that peerless moment when the mind comes to itself, and you determine to do a man's work in a world which needs men so sorely, what is all this in its deeper meaning? It is a living God speaking to your mind. It is the revelation of the Father to the child. It is the universal mind calling to the individual mind. It is Truth demanding your loyalty. It is a religious experience, close, inevitable, real. And the true answer of the mind, when it thus comes to itself, is to say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will dedicate to him the wondrous gift he has put into my hands." Or when, in the crises of your duty, the way of peace and right summons you with its sweet compulsion, it is once more the call of the Eternal Right, making itself heard in your waking soul. It is the summons of God through the voice of duty. Not far away lie the sources of religious trust,—not in the evidences of the stars or seas or ancient man, but here amid the inevitable experiences of our daily mistakes and of our sincere repentances.

repentances. The life of God and the life of man are all interwoven in the web of human experiences.

“So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, ‘Thou must,’
The youth replies, ‘I can.’”

There is but one way of separating the life of God from the souls of men. It is by withdrawing one's self into that distant country of forgetfulness and self-absorption, of passion and lust. Then the messages of God, while they are still sent, fail to penetrate into the life, and remain unheard. But, when the mind or the will comes to itself, then it recognizes the call of God in these deeper passages of experience; and it answers this “drawing of the Father” with the response of a son,—“I will arise, and go to the home where I belong, and will finish the work that is given me of my God to do.”

XXV.

JUDGMENTS OF LIFE.

PSALM x.

IN the psalm which we have read together this afternoon, David gives us one of those strong descriptions, emphatic and intense, of the wicked man and the fate that awaits him. One of the things that always strike us in the Psalms of David is the distinctness with which the wicked man and the righteous man stand before us as clear and distinguishable individuals. We, with our modern ideas and subtle thought, are apt to think of every bad man as partly good and every good man as partly bad, of goodness and badness as always mingled together in personal character. We are so apt to think this that the good man and the bad man do not stand out so clearly before us as they did before David, and, I think I may say, as they stood out before Christ. While
that

that analysis and perception of the weakness of character in each man's life, which is so familiar to us, is very good, David's thought is no doubt the true one,—that there is, after all, in every character determination which declares for righteousness or toward unrighteousness. Therefore, the wicked man is distinguished as the man who does not desire goodness, as the man whose face is set away from righteousness, who is living in the midst of unrighteousness, and is content with that life.

I was struck with one verse—the fifth—in that psalm, which describes in one definition this wicked man and his content to live in unrighteousness. David says, “Thy judgments are far above, out of his sight.”

God's judgments are out of a man's sight. Just think of it for a moment. There are regions of which we have no cognizance, which do not enter into our thought or sympathy, in which we are being judged every day. A man's life depends much upon his consciousness of the judgments passed upon him. If a man is satisfied with the lower judgments relating

relating to his earthly condition, which appeal to his immediate prospects, he leaves untasted and untouched his right to the richer series of judgments, which are far above him, and which are condemning or approving all his life. It almost seems to open the universe before us, to let us see the clouds in the heavens filled with the long series of thrones, growing whiter and whiter until the great white throne stands above them all. On each one sits one of the judges, and at the summit of all God himself; and every action that we do, every thought, and every life is ever passing up and being judged at each one of these separate judgment seats. And the richness and the sacredness and solemnity of a man's life depend on his consciousness of these judgments which are forever being passed upon him. And the condemnation of the wicked, according to David, is that God's judgments are so far above out of sight, that he is so groping in the dust of the present life that he is unconscious, that he is unmoved, unsolemnized, unchanged, unaffected, by all the great judgments which the higher powers of the universe are passing upon his life.

Think

Think how many of us live in lower judgments. Think how we live before the judgment-seat of pleasure, deciding whether the thing that we are going to do is to give us happiness or unhappiness for the moment. Think how we live before the judgment-seat of profit, deciding whether the thing we are going to do shall make us richer or poorer. Think how we live before the judgment-seat of reputation, doing or not doing things according as those who stand around us, with no higher standards than our own, are going to disapprove or approve. And all the time tower before us these great judgment-seats of God, so far above us, out of sight. Think what some of them are.

The universe is judging us all the time as to whether we shall find and occupy the place that has been appointed for us in the purposes of God. There is no more solemn thought for any man than that there is some one place in the world which is meant for him, which he is capable of filling, and nobody else can fill. And the universe is perpetually judging him by that special place, and it is condemning or approving him as he does or
leaves

leaves undone the part set for him to do among all the millions of mankind.

Then there is the judgment which absolute Righteousness is always passing upon us, the calm abstraction which we call the Right, which makes itself known so really through all the operations of the world. These our lives come up before that Righteousness, sitting throned in its calmness, and are judged by it. It casts us aside for our perversity, or it takes us into its embrace, and makes us stronger for what little righteous contribution we have made to the good activities of the world.

Then there are all the pure and noble men who are forever judging us,—not malignantly condemning us, not feebly applauding us for little things, but deciding, as we come into their presence, whether there is any use in us, whether there is anything that we can do to make things stronger in the interests of which they live.

Thus the universe and righteousness and the noblest men are sitting on the judgment-seats; and our thoughts and lives are forever coming before them for judgment.

judgment. And above them, whiter than them all, is the great white throne, where God himself is sitting, knowing every action of our lives, judging whether we are capable of receiving him,—God with his inexpressible, unutterable, unfathomable love, trying to put himself into our lives, to make us rich with his richness, good with his goodness, and finding in our character every moment either acceptance or repulsion, either invitation or rejection of his love; God judging us with that importunate affection which beats at the door of our nature, with that affection which would fain make our lives filled with his life, with that affection that feels itself accepted or refused, the judgment of the soul being in the refusal of the offer of God.

O my dear friends, when these great judgments open themselves above us, when these great judgment-seats are filling the sky, and we know that every deed of ours comes before them, how solemn and how dreadful that life becomes,—the life which is forever moving toward these judgment-seats and does not know it, the life to which all of God's judgments are out of sight!

Sometimes,

Sometimes, you see your friend close at your side doing a work or living a life that is full of discontent. His face grows troubled. The world does not satisfy him as it has been satisfying him. You see that his aspirations are going somewhere far beyond your thought. What does it mean? That he has lifted up his eyes and has seen the loftier and nobler judgment-seats, and that his judgments have come back to him. God grant that they may remain with him until he shall have so remade his life by the power of these lofty judgments that it shall be reconciled to God, and he shall come before them and no longer be ashamed, but say, "I shall be satisfied with no approval until the universe, righteousness, and the holiest men and God shall claim me for the noblest work that they can do for me and that I can do for them."

The life of Jesus, what was it? A life forever pressing forward, forever being judged by higher and higher standards,—a life that had peace and freedom from the little slavery and the miserable standards of lower judgments, which stood face to face with God; for there was no judgment

ment of the eternal law, the eternal love, that was out of his sight. Not peace, as we call peace; not peace that lives in complacency and is content,—nothing should satisfy us short of the peace that is absolute reconciliation with God, that sees and accepts his divine standards, that is willing and craves — nay, demands — to be judged by the highest; no peace short of that peace which eternity shall bring to us, when, having matched the perfect demand with complete obedience, we shall move before the judgment-seat with joy, absolute and perfect! There comes a peace before that, which is the peace of struggle, the peace of looking forward to that which alone, when it is attained, shall be absolute, entire rest. The peace of the soul which is possible now is the peace of the journey. Only when we come to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect shall we have the peace of rest, and the work that shall bring no perplexity, no weariness, no misgivings, but infinite effectiveness, progressiveness, and power forever and forever. In the peace of the journey which despises the sluggish peace which has not yet set out, in the peace of
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the journey which expects the peace of the end, may we go on in these days, while God keeps us living in this world, to the richer world that is to come !

XXVI.

REMEMBERING GOD.

ECCL. xii. 1.

THAT word "remember," standing where it does, must mean a great deal. It must mean to keep in mind the thought of God as the shaping, constructive, sovereign influence in life. The idea of beauty, the artist paints by; the idea of the special harvest, the farmer tills the field by; the chart, the mariner sails by. So of the idea of God. We are to think by it; we are to feel in reference to it; we are to work under its inspiration; we are to live by the power of its life and incentive. The idea of God is illumination and power. It is interpretation, and it is the power of realization. When we keep in mind the idea of a Creator vitally, vividly, profoundly, we provide for a celestial interpretation of human existence and for the divine power in the realization of that

that interpretation. This I understand to be what the writer meant by the word "remember." Now for two or three thoughts urging us to this practice in youth.

First of all, youth is educable. If a man wants to be a mechanic or a merchant or a physician, he begins early. It is essential to the trade or the profession that it shall be so. If a man wants to Christianize his life, to make that life religious, ought he not to begin early, in analogy with other things which he does? Take some bright-eyed child with you, walk through the city or any place of interest, and mark how many things that child will observe which are entirely ignored by you. Why so? Because childhood is immeasurably more impressionable than youth. So youth is immeasurably more impressionable than manhood. And just as the hot wax receives the impression clearly and retains it lastingly, so the impressionable mind of youth receives the stamp of the character of God more clearly and retains it more lastingly than in the subsequent periods of life.

Then consider, too, how simple life is when we are young. Look at the business

ness man of forty, and see how his life has left its original simplicity. He is no longer simply a son and a brother, a friend and a student: he is himself a husband and a father, and a business man with a hundred cares and responsibilities. His life has branched out into wonderful complexity. It is intricate, complicated, hard to manage. Now, suppose that the man of forty begins to be religious. How difficult is his problem,—to take that single force of the idea of God and send it through all these relationships in which he stands! It cannot be done. It is like an attempt to thread not one or ten or a score, but a hundred needles at once. But, if the man begins early, it is different. He is a son; and he lets the love of God bear upon that relation, and seeks for the power of God to realize the meaning of it. He is a brother, a friend, a student. These are the simple relations in which he stands. Let him bring these under the divine illumination, open his heart to the power that leads him to realize their divine meaning. Then, when his life enlarges, it will be a process of assimilation. He is religious at the core,
and

and the substantial relations in which he stands are already Christianized. Life will be simply the growth of godliness.

Then, again, if a man wants to make any high attainment in religion, he must begin early. What is religion but the consecration and the perfection of human life? And, if it be the consecration and perfection of human life, ought not the passion of a man's heart to be for eminence in it? When a man wakes up to a thirst for knowledge late in life, he is pursued by everlasting regret that he did not wake up earlier. When a man becomes prudent after he has squandered the fortune left him by his father, having missed what opportunities for enrichment have already presented themselves, he is pursued by the same regret. Whenever a man raises an ideal later than he should have raised it, he brings upon himself regret. Whenever a man raises the ideal of a Christian life later than he should have raised it, the same regret comes upon him; for he sees that he has subtracted from his possible life as a rational being. Take so many of the men that call themselves religious,—their religion is simply a sentiment.

timent. It is a precious sentiment. But it is not conduct, it is not life, but simply sentiment. They do not begin early enough to go beyond the sentimental stage into that of habit and character.

If we begin early, we may expect finally the consummate blessing and power of the religious life,—spontaneity in work, spontaneity in noble views of God, in noble views of men and of the future of the world, spontaneity in goodness. Is not this the case with most of us,—instinctively pagan, reflectively Christian, spontaneously selfish, with deliberation unselfish? Is not this our hard battle when our instincts are unchristianized and remain in the pagan state, that simply by reflection, by deliberation, by the power of reason, is a man good? If we began early, we should reach the instincts, and transfigure them; we should harness this power of spontaneity to the chariot of the Lord. If we begin early to subject our life to the sovereign power of the idea of God, if we set it forth under the illumination of his light and under the realizing power of his love, our religion shall at last become a spontaneous and instinctive thing

thing. We shall become instinctively Christian, spontaneously noble. Reflection shall have the wings of spontaneity and instinct to carry it into the pure upper air of divine service, of divine thought, and divine hope.

Yes: begin early, because it is right. We do so everywhere else. Begin early, because life is simple then. Begin early, because we want eminence in religious life, as in everything else. Begin early, because we want an instinctive and spontaneous Christianity.

May all the fresh life here, full of the pride of youth, aspire after that Christianity which means the consecration and perfection of human existence! May such religion become the passion, the glorious, overmastering passion, of every soul!

XXVII.

ENLARGEMENT OF LIFE.

LUKE xix.

I READ this parable a few weeks since in conducting this service, wishing to take from it the lesson which it gives us of the varieties of human character and human life. We will look now for the other lesson which it teaches us, in the enlargement of life,—that the servants of God, if they do their duty, shall enlarge their lives from day to day, and indeed forever. If there be any proper gospel for the day, this is that gospel; for, as you will see in the connection, the parable was pronounced by Jesus just a day or two before Palm Sunday, as they were on their way to Jerusalem. In fact, the passage begins when Luke says, “He added and spake a parable to them, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.”

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In this parable and the corresponding parable, the lesson of the enlargement of life as the real recompense of duty is spoken of in the most distinct way; and it is clear that each parable would have been incomplete without this lesson of the enlargement of life. The faithful servants are not rewarded in kind: they are rewarded by promotion to a higher life. These men who have been dealing with a few paltry pounds or a few paltry talents are rewarded by entering into the joy of their lord and by the command of cities. This man, who traded with a little money, got profit on it and invested the profit, traded with it again and invested that, finds himself in a position where he is no longer buying and selling, does not have to watch the market, does not have to invest his rent. He is now riding from one city to the other: he is building up a public library here, he is attending to the drainage there, and is seeing to the better administration. In all this work, he is using the same moral faculties in virtue of which his master has promoted him. But he is not merely promoted from one seat in his master's trading-house to a
higher

higher seat in that trading-house: he is lifted out of that trading-house, and is promoted to be the master of five cities or ten cities; and he has entered into the joy of his Lord.

This lesson, which in both of the parables is the lesson of enlargement, shows us, in this critical moment of Jesus' life, how eager he is that we shall understand what we are in this world for. It is the enlargement of our lives.

You will hear a great deal of discussion at the present time about what is the character of the retribution which is to follow life in this world. There is no nobler or finer illustration of it, from one end of the New Testament to the other, than is given in these two parables. In each of them, we see that the transfer from this life to the other is a transfer in which the same moral characteristics go from one life to the other, so that life is enlarged, so that one who trades with a few pennies here is lifted up to the management of cities there. We understand this all in our life here. You come to a university. What do you come here for? For the enlargement of your lives. You
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go to the gymnasium. Why? For the enlargement of your physical strength. You enter on the track, that he who can run a mile in seven minutes this week may run a mile in six minutes next month, and perhaps before six months are over may run a mile in fifty or sixty seconds less than six minutes. Precisely so the opportunity of every lecture or recitation is the enlargement of intellectual power. The boy, who was obliged diligently and with difficulty to work out a problem with arithmetic, finds that by a simple process he works it out with more success in algebra, and then learns that there are higher steps yet to come. And, as he passes up into the various stages of the calculus, he finds that these earlier processes are less needful to him, as his larger intellectual life enables him to use power and to work out problems which he could not work out before.

But such enlargement is not all. The action and effort of his life come out upon a larger plan. The life which Jesus spoke of is on a higher level; and, as I hope we cannot try to show too often, it is a promise which is given to all sorts and conditions

tions of men. The promise is not simply given to him who has the brilliant intellect with which a Goethe might astonish the world. It is not a promise given to him who has the athletic power of a Samson or somebody else, who can pull down columns in the temple. It has nothing to do with the mere physical or intellectual power of the man concerned. It is a promise that there shall be an enlargement of spiritual or moral power. It is a promise that the man shall see more and more as God sees; that he shall live to God's glory more and more completely, and shall be able to go about his Father's business more and more as life goes on.

If you are inquiring with regard to this matter of compensation or retribution, be careful to shun that frequent suggestion that God has put you into this world as if he had put you into a court-room,—as if you were to be watched by this detective and that, and at the end to be tried whether you have done ill or not. That analogy is misleading. The analogy of a university is the true analogy. In this world, you are in a school where you are to be educated for life higher and higher,—

higher,—just as it says in the parable,—so that he who has managed a few pounds has ten cities. He who has here a little hope, a little love, a little faith, is to be so trained in this school or university, which we call the World, that he shall grow in hope, shall grow in faith, and shall grow in love.

I meet with young gentlemen, members of this university of Cambridge, who do not understand why it is that God has been pleased to give them such advantages as he has given them. They have only to go to the other end of Boston to see lads of their own age who have not equal advantages; and they ask, "What is the fairness of a system, that we, so to speak, are born in purple, while that poor lad yonder is in the midst of destitution?" If God were going to measure us by our athletic or our intellectual strength, this question would be a fair one, and a very difficult one to answer. But the lad in the midst of the slums of Boston or the gentlemen here, who have been born to the highest opportunities, are alike in this reality: that they have this moral sense, this sense of the difference between right
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and wrong. That lad and this gentleman here are alike to seek to grow in hope, in faith, in love.

Well for us if we make use of the matchless opportunities for intellectual training that are given here. We are to use them, so that, when they fail, as fail they must, "the children of light shall receive us into everlasting habitations." We are to have a nearer sense of God. "Nearer to thee, my God, nearer to thee,"—that is faith. We are to have more faith. As each year goes on, we are to be living, not for time merely, but for that which transcends time: we are to be living for eternity,—not living for the year 1888, not living for the four years of a college existence, not living for the threescore years and ten that may be given to a human being, but living as those who can look beyond time and enter into life with God. This is to live in hope.

Greater than either of these, says Saint Paul, is it to live in union, in harmony, in co-operation, with all men, our brothers, and with all women, our sisters, in this world; to accept the solidarity of the human race, to bear our brothers' burdens,
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to teach and be taught, to lend and borrow, to lead and be led, to go forward as one great company of God's children in the great commonwealth of Christ. So much better this than for a man to say, "For myself I will live, and for myself I will die." To live thus, knit in with the whole body of mankind,—this is what those Gospels mean when they speak of living in love. Love, as Paul tells us, is the greatest of the three elements of life. It is these three realities of life with God, life in eternity, life with our brothers and sisters of the world,—these realities which are named faith and hope and love,—it is these which are the infinite elements of our lives. And we in this university or the boy doing his duty in the slums yonder are at one in the work that we may enlarge our faith, enlarge our hope, that we may enlarge our love. That we may so enlarge our lives is our steadfast prayer to the Father of us all.

XXVIII.

THE MASTER'S GUEST-CHAMBER.

MARK xiv. 1-17.

THAT, too, was Thursday evening. A great multitude, whom no man can number, account this the sacred week of the year, and its hours more serious and more impressive than any others. Many men of varying beliefs and varying habits will to-morrow bow at the cross of Christ with penitent, loving hearts. On Sunday, the world over, the air will be filled with Easter carols, and hearts with Easter blessings. In every place where the name of Christ is known there will be gladness.

On this Thursday our Lord sent two of his disciples before him into Jerusalem, as we have read, because he desired to keep with them the Passover, the memorial feast which he had kept from his boyhood. He told them that they should find a man bearing

bearing a pitcher of water. Him they should follow ; and they should say to the good man of the house, The master says, "Where is my guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?" One of the best things that the revisers of the New Testament have done for us is to change some of the smaller words. They have taught us that Jesus said, "Where is *my* guest-chamber?"—not yours, not another man's, not the room for all the travellers who come to Jerusalem at this season, but, Where is *my* room at this house? And the man shall show you a large upper room furnished and ready: there prepare the Passover. Through all the centuries since a great procession, never broken, has gone up those outer stairs, and come down richer and stronger for the hour they have spent with him. This is history for us all. This is experience for all who love him and trust him.

Yet he has not always been so fortunate as he was on that day. He never found room for himself before. When they came to Bethlehem, there was no room for his father and mother in the inn. Then, after a few days, Herod thought to push him
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from the world that would be overcrowded with more than one king. When he came to Nazareth and began to talk with his neighbors and friends, they drove him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, and would have thrust him down headlong. Nazareth was too small for him. When he went to Jerusalem, Pilate drove him beyond the city wall, lifted him on the cross, and bade him vanish from a world which had no room for him. In the pathetic sentence of the gospel, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Once he walked from the shore out upon the sea, and found room there; and once, from the top of the mountains, he ascended into the upper air, and found room there. But from the beginning to the end, with rare exceptions, there was no room for him. It is better to-day. The finest buildings in the world are his. The finest music in the world sings his praises. The finest paintings in the world represent him. Civilization dates everything from the night when he was born. He is the centre of history, the centre of light; and in almost every college in the world he has made himself a place. If he
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could be contented with a large homage, with reverence, with worship, he might well be satisfied. Yet, with importunity that was never more pressing, he is still knocking at the door with the old question, "Where is my guest-chamber?"

It is the sad truth that the greater part of the world has not heard his name. It is, perhaps, even a sadder truth that many who have heard his name have been indifferent to his approach. The world is not hostile to Christ. I wish it were. Hostility means life. Men are indifferent, and that is worse than opposition. We can sail the seas in a storm; but what can we do in a fog? The world is pre-occupied. Our time is all taken up. We are very busy. Our engagements are made, our life is invested. There seems little place to admit him,—to admit any one who craves not merely entrance, but the large upper room. He has never lessened that demand,—the large room, the upper room. The large room may be the palace hall or a narrow cell. The upper room may be one whose windows open toward Jerusalem or a dungeon in the ground. It is the largest we have, the
largest

largest and the highest room, where he may find his guest-chamber.

Brethren, we ask ourselves perhaps to-night, Why is it that he needs so much? The answer is simply this, Because he *is* so much. The Lord, the King, the Redeemer, the Saviour of men, he needs a great deal of room,—room enough to walk in, room enough to work in, room enough to live in. He who fills the spaces around us needs the largest room that we have.

Then think what he brings with him! He brings with him that cross on which the world has been redeemed: the cross needs much room. He brings in the throne, that he may assert his authority over us; and it is a very large throne. "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength." When we think of the gifts which he brings, robbing heaven to enrich us, we find that it needs not a spare day or a spare hour or a spare place: it needs more room than we have to hold the gifts. And, when he would come with that spirit which needs to breathe itself into our hearts and lives, it is clear that no walls are broad enough, no roof
high

high enough, to confine what would bless us in the fulness of its boundless presence. He comes to teach, to strengthen, to comfort, to inspire, not some section of our life or some portion of our time, but the large upper room. If you will, recall for a moment what our Lord did in this upper room in Jerusalem, when it had been thrown open to him. Over his words, reverent hearts are still lingering. The highest prayers which are offered under the sun are prayers for the things which he promised to men in that large upper room. There he taught the lesson of service, washing the disciples' feet, and instructing them that the law of life is not to be ministered unto, but to minister; to give to others,—that sublime law toward which faintly and inconstantly we are struggling. Did he not spread his table before them, and give them divine food and drink? Did he not teach them that in his Father's house are many mansions, and that he would prepare a place for them, and come again, and receive them to himself? Did he not teach them that he was the vine, and that he would impart life to every one who came to him
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and clung to him? Did he not leave it as his prayer that they all might be one; that, out of this discord of our lives, we might be one in him and his Father? Did he not breathe on them the benediction of his own peace? Surely, these are the blessings which we need this day.

O brethren, let us give it, not some spare room for which we have no use, not some Sunday afternoon which is not engaged, not some year when the work of life is over, but the year of thought, of strength, of purpose,—the large upper room for the large upper Lord who comes bearing all his blessings with him.

How, as we close this service for this year, can we do it better than to hear that question, which he is certainly asking us to-night, asking us in whose heart he has gained admission, pressing his way into something larger than he has found? Can we do better than to hear the question, "Where is my guest-chamber?" O man, where is the guest-chamber in your life? Blessed are we on this day, if we open unto him the large room, and keep with him the Passover that is the earnest of an everlasting rejoicing. God give to us, as
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The Master's Guest-chamber. 233

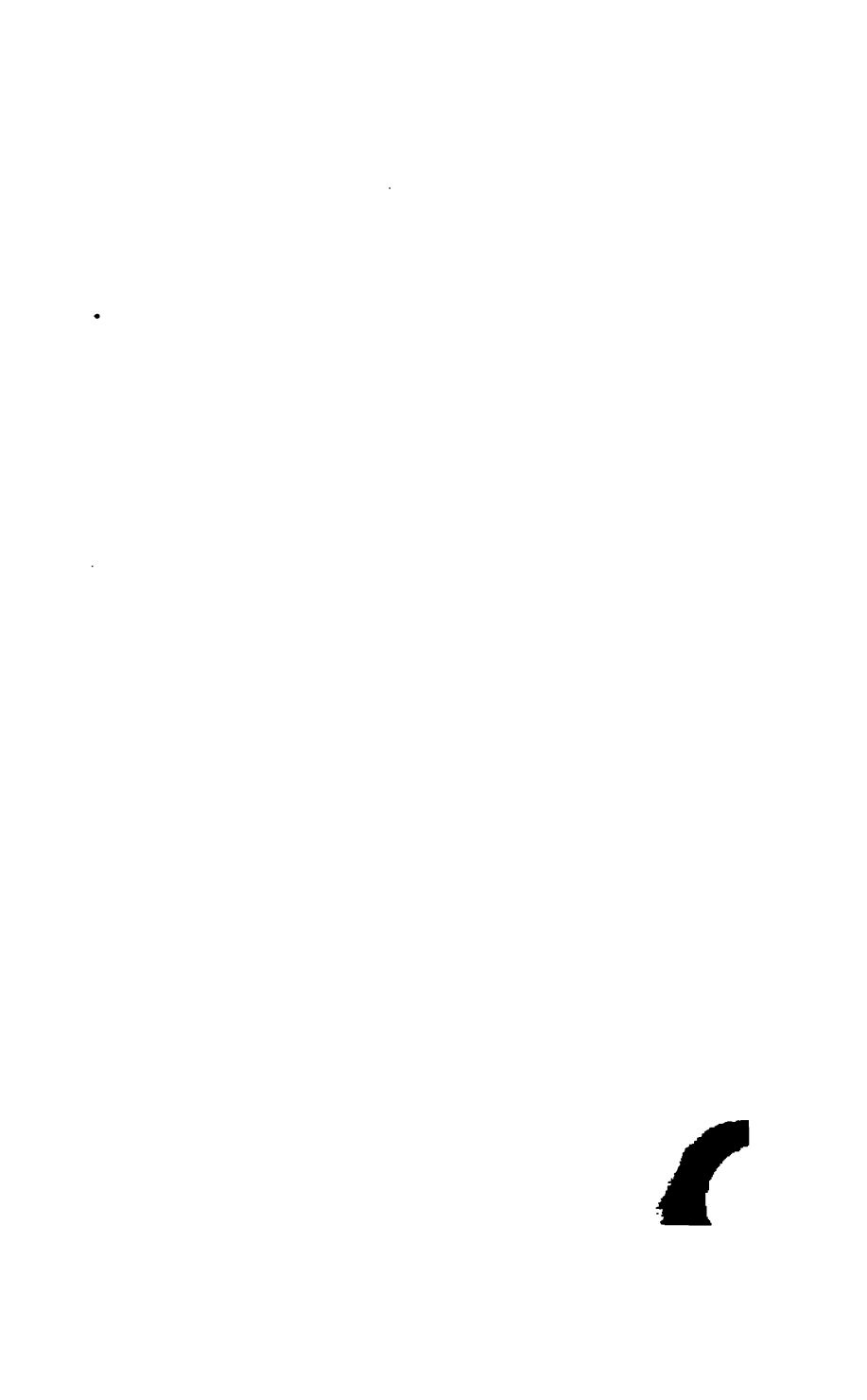
we separate and go our ways,— God give
to us this grace, to receive Him whom he
has sent into the world to be to us the
Truth and the Life!















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